



By Mrs T. F. Steward.



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# THE INTERDICT,

A NOVEL.

"Do thou, my soul, the destin'd period wait,  
When God shall solve the dark decrees of fate;  
His now unequal dispensations clear,  
And make all wise and beautiful appear."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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## THE INTERDICT.

### CHAPTER I.

I sit entranc'd in mem'ry's silent hall ;  
Forward from marble shrines pale figures bend  
In pensive recognition. Quickly all  
The *now* fades into nothingness ; the friend  
I loved oblit'rates him I love ; the blaze  
Which noontide splendours to life's autumn lend,  
Is dimm'd by thronging thoughts of calm spring-days.

It may happen that I shall be pronounced vain and egotistical for shadowing forth the following story under the first person, and for placing myself foremost of the *corps dramatique* ; but he of whom nobody else would speak, may be excused for saying a little of himself, and he at whom nobody would look, were goodlier forms in view, should, modestly—it being stated that he must be dragged in somewhere—come forward when he may hope to escape the odium of comparison ; just as



the minor member of a drama shuffles with panting heart to the proscenium, to set the chairs and smooth the cushions for more exalted *debutanti*.

Furthermore, the following sketch will prove that I have little demonstrable excuse for self-complacency. I was a poor-looking weed, whom no physical culture, however salutary, could warm into healthfulness; a pale, abstracted book-worm, with dark-browed deep-seated eyes, which saw no fairer object than a musty classic. A halt in my gait, and a difficulty of utterance, occasioned, not by malformation of the articulating organs, but by sheer fright at finding myself talking, increased to very painfulness my constitutional shyness and reserve.

Of our family circle the next in plainness, but prior to all others in the art of 'plaguing, was a cousin named Quinilla—Miss Quinny O'Toole as Slauveen, her serving lad, used to dignify her.—Oh, she was a wearisome woman!—not a whit less slighted than myself by comeliness, yet she thought herself a beauty. She was spare in every thing but words. She

had thin red hair, a thin red nose, her lips were thin, her jaws such as we vulgarly call *lantern*; her residue of structure was equally attenuated. She built her beauty on two keen grey eyes, and what she called a splendid foot and ankle.

Our cousin was no favorite of mine. She was verbose by nature and cultivation; her velocity of speech distracted me; it was a hurricane of syllables, drifted, as it were, into one hissing, whistling, never ending sentence. Measured with her ideas her words were in the ratio of a bushel to a grain. Talk of poverty of language!—our cousin never knew such indigence—she could help you on occasion to a lac of vocables, or edge in, generously, the very word you panted to bring out.

Quinilla (she clings to my pen like an officious hair) was not our genuine cousin; she was sister to my uncle's wife, but, fearing we might call her *aunt*, had dubbed herself by a less matronly appellative. She piqued herself on ancient blood, and made boast of her propinquity to the great O'Tooles of Glendalough.

Her sister, my aunt Laurentia, had nothing

but descent in common with Quinilla—She was a blunt, rightminded, cheerful woman; clear in perception (where her partialities did not interfere) and resolute in action; tenacious of her family, and her sister's beauty. The spontaneous kindness of her nature gave an expression of honest interest to her countenance, and a friendly accent to her true-hearted idiomatic style of speech. To superficial observers she appeared merely an outspoken thrifty person:—even I used for many years to wonder how so polished a man as my uncle, Edward Fitzgerald, should have chosen so unintellectual a partner; but I have long learned to value her rectitude of mind beyond the proudest gifts of genius.

And now stand forth ye gentler images to spiritualize my canvass—ye fair and sweet creations, whose childish faces come to me in dreams, whose griefs and joys and warm affections are, as it were, entwined with my identity. And surely we were shrined each in the other's heart, my sisters, even from

Those chequered days of babyhood,  
When mirth would tread on melancholy,  
And they would seem companions.

Which of you, mates of my thoughtless years, which of you, first, in maiden drapery, shall live upon my sketch-leaf?—If I choose the mirthful, the pensive gently advances her entreating face;—if I choose the serious, the cherub head, bright with frolic's essence, is waved reproachfully. Come then Marion, my own dear Marion, come.

I cannot well determine in what Marion's beauty lay; whether in feature, look, or tone. You saw the face was lovely, but could not explain *why* you wished to treasure it in memory, and call it forth at will to gaze at, for many besides Marion have had cloudless eyes of deep deep blue, bright hair, and dimpled cheeks. The beholder was ever doubtful in what her witchery consisted; before you could observe the regularity of feature you were taken by the life and spirit of the face; but at every thought this spirit seemed to change.—You loved its sprightliness—'twas gone!—its pensiveness—'twas lost in smiles of arch defiance, petulance, or derision.

The beauty of Helen, my younger sister, was more intelligible;—a tranquil countenance,

features of a Spanish cast, dark eyes, not sparkling, but singularly penetrating.—An air of diffidence tempered the gravity of her demeanour; this diffidence, however, was occasionally blended with a defensive pride which, when excited, kept down the blushes of timidity. Marion, with all her light-hearted sauciness, was a very coward; the mere accent of severity depressed her; but Helen, when justly roused, would forget her *usual* self in the earnestness of expostulation.

The sisters' characters in other points, too, might puzzle the observer. The elder, quick to resent, and sometimes humourously perverse, could be frightened even into a surrender of her judgment; the younger, careless and yielding in minor points, if convinced that opposition was essential, would manifest a resolute tenacity little expected from one who in the smoother scenes of life was bashfully averse to observation and display. The lot of the one should have been cast in fondness and sunshine; the other was a high-minded creature with a capacity for enjoyment in any sphere of action.



Their tastes and pursuits could as little have been inferred from their outward seeming as their characters. Whatever was marvellous in tradition and mystical in nature Marion's sentiments were akin to; she was insatiate of witch-spun stories, of tales that embody the romantic spirit of chivalry, and revelled in the Runic legends bequeathed by the bards who had accompanied our Northern invaders. Helen's enthusiasm was more subdued, her tastes graver, and I had coaxed her into the paths of scholastic erudition; but while she did homage to the genius, she either could not understand, or would not subscribe to, the sublime assumptions of the early philosophers. She ridiculed my veneration for mad patriots and visionary republics; and insisted that if I continued to bewilder myself with flimsy subtleties I should lose the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, and also my reverence for those high ordinances which forbade the abominations so freely practised by my heroes and enacted by my legislators.—But these debates were held in after years; it is in the May-time of girlhood that I now portray my sisters.

For a long time I as little doubted the entity of my mythologic dames and heroes as of my beloved historians and philosophers; and believed as steadfastly in Minos as in Herodotus. Of the world's system and its substances, of the laws which regulate the universe, I knew just as much as those rhapsodists inculcated, who made the planets a chromatic hurly-burly, and the earth a rocking-horse fortuitously formed of dancing atoms; and of the world's modern usages and practices I had just as much idea as a resuscitated Pythagorean might be imagined to possess.

My uncle and my tutor—both were combined in one—was as enamoured of my old scholiasts as myself, though not perhaps as intimately persuaded of the truth and justness of their systems. The world had so ill treated him or some one dear to him, that to shut out its very name he had immured himself in a wild glen near the South-western coast of Ireland. There, severed by almost trackless mountains from the din of public life, he gradually lost even the impressions which communion with busier scenes had made. In proportion

as these had faded, his natural tone of mind resumed its vigour; misanthropy, with all its sour concomitants, departed; he looked back to nothing of the past except to the classic studies of his youth; his books recalled to him the only race of humankind he wished to recollect; even the wholesome teaching of experience, because it brought the base-minded again upon the foreground, was sought to be obliterated.

My good uncle!—I see him now bending forward his patriarchal head, thoughts full of kindness legible in his eye—*Can* I do justice to the benevolence which knew better how to suffer than to witness pain! the self denial practised to encrease the store from which our ragged neighbours were relieved!

My uncle could not hate, he could not even be unkind; his nature wanted the incitement. For every child he had a friendly nod, a half-penny. The very churl would wear a gracious look before him, cheated into courteousness by a face that wore

“The lineaments of gospel books.”

Every thing connected with my uncle in his

mountain home is fresh and prominent—even his old high-backed chair, with each feature of its curious carved work, I can call forth to seat him in—his study chair—the back of which we used to climb, and stroke his head, and turn it from the Median wars to notice our mock combats. In after days grown more sedate, taught—not from reproof—to understand his silent wave, how we would steal each to a favorite nook in this our favorite room, and softly drawing forth a volume, (oftimes a folio more weighty than ourselves) would soon become as rapt in bye-gone days as he was, as intimate with buried heroes, poets, and philosophers.

This study was the scene of noiseless and supreme delight, our port of refuge from Quinilla's clatter, our self-awarded little Goshen. Nor was our studious turn extraordinary: we were children of the rocks and wilds; our tendencies, training, and habits were peculiar; we never saw a toy, we scarcely knew the meaning of accomplishments; we were quite indifferent to the form and texture of our raiment, whether it were coarse or fine, suitable

or unbecoming; we had no one to compete with; between us and the natives of our glen there was just the *grade* which separates the rustic from the clown. Of artificial life we knew no more than what the mimic images in antiquated books displayed to us, or what Quinilla's livelier images at times revealed. We learned just what we wished to learn, and no more; we were never tasked, never praised, at least for our acquirements. Our scripture teaching was not forced and of necessity; it was never made unamiable by penance. Books became our load-stars simply from the unalloyed enjoyment they afforded, other sources of a child's amusement finding no path to our retirement.

Our library was not exclusively a temple for the ancients, albeit the fairest portion of it was allotted to my oracles. Some moderns, mostly English of the Elizabethan age or earlier, had, rather from accident than from good will, found entrance there; and, like intruders, had been assigned a stinted lodgment in a neglected corner, piled between the top shelf and the ceiling. They were eleemosynary guests—in-



mates on mere tolerance—visited only by the moths, until Helen, rather at issue with my philosophy, sought out some clearer system to arrive at truth, and in her voyage of research lighted on the “black letter region.” Curiously examining the long slighted occupants she selected some which were promptly located in a freer quarter, thenceforward her *sacrarium*.

Marion, who had not a particle of taste for any thing in classic story, unless it were for Socrates’ familiar genius, seized upon the tomes rejected by her sister. Her shriek of rapture startled my uncle, then planning with Xenophon the retreat of the ten thousand, and tumbled me from Helicon. Chronicles of Ireland, some in a garb so stiff and antiquated that none but so attached a devotee could have desired their acquaintance ; legends in vellum of our Scythic ancestors, glossaries and itineraries with marvellous addenda ; an Irish bible of 1681 ; an Ossian, (the most modern and best dressed of the party,) a well thumbed Shakspeare ; Josephus, the Fairie Queen, and Spenser’s state of Ireland ; curious annals, Bardic traditions, and, above all, a copious dis-

sertation on Irish faerie and demonology—such were the dust-covered, worm-eaten dainties Marion so clamorously greeted; diet she thenceforth fed upon, to the discomfiture of the old devourers.

## CHAPTER II.

Chasing the lessons of maturer age  
Come fancy's coinings ; Runes and nurs'ry tales,  
And prattled mysteries, the fairy page,  
The "once upon a time," which never fails  
To silence murmur. Lullaby of pain,  
Leader of thought — Fiction—thy halcyon sails  
Waft us to childhood's wonders back again.

THUS did we hold converse with the dead, each in a chosen nook ; oftentimes interchanging thoughts and sympathies, quoting or reciting from a favored author, and by this commerce of opinion participating somewhat in each other's studies. Marion's legends won more fixed attention than our abstruser themes : even my uncle was at times detected skulking from the field of Marathon, to listen to the

feats of O'Driscoll or McCarthy, St. Lawrence or De Courcy. Helen also often deserted *El dorado* for figments as ingenious: while her sister read, she would interweave the graver subject of her own reflections with the chivalric or romantic fiction, and incorporating therewith traits of humble life and "right merry conceits"—such specimens of drollery and untutored sentiment as our mountain clan afforded,—she would shadow out a tale to which, at even-tide, we all became wide-gaping auditors.

Whenever a variety was wanted Quinilla would wedge in some apt absurdity—absurdity at least to our untaught conceptions, in which the world's traffickers obscurely floated. Quinilla was indeed, to us, "mankind's epitome;" the only one of us who knew of life, of conventional, punctilious life—*polite* she called it. She had kept up her early training in gentility by annual visits to Mrs. Bullock, a brazier's wife in Cork, and erst a school-mate of our cousin. This Mrs. B. (thus termed in soft elision by Quinilla,) had lost a *leetle caste*, but gained encrease of *substance*, by her union with the brazier; and though some *Plebs* related

to the husband were grudgingly admitted to her *routs*, yet still the wife kept up her aristocracy by an interfusion of *tip-tops*.

What a flash would Quinny make in this her yearly issue from eclipse!—I see her at this moment equipped in scarlet riding-dress, pillioned behind Slauveen on Lanty Maw, a testy rat-tailed pack-horse, my uncle's only beast of burthen.

Slauveen was the most accomplished member of the household. There was not a bird or beast in our rough glen whose tone he could not borrow—he seemed engrafted into every tribe, adopted by the sympathies of every genus, and when he wished the creatures followed him. Also, he commanded half a dozen countenances, the which he shifted so adroitly to serve his own and puzzle others' speculations, that the visage nature gave him could rarely be detected.

He had been selected by Quinilla as a fit recipient of her syllogisms; something to exhaust her *erudition* on. When old enough he was appointed *Esquire* to our cousin on her city visits, and drilled into a type of Mrs.



Bullock's week-day shop-boy, and Sunday lacquey. His lady changed the pet name of "Slauveen," bestowed by his compeers of the glen, into "Patricius," and by vociferous remonstrance won him to wear shoes and "look like something human;" still, but at longer intervals, imparting "erudition," which her discreet disciple rejected or received according to his humour, for not even Quinilla's rhetoric could fix Slauveen's attention when Marion's quick, light footstep struck his ear—vainly would our cousin spend her moving eloquence; the page was like a post. I have seen her weep with rage while her Patricius stood a statue of himself; a living log, until the climax of her wrath would burst into the welcome words—"get out!"—The moment after, nothing of Slauveen confronted his insulted patroness, but just his empty shoes; echo had not repeated the command before the barefooted delinquent was already half way up the "Fairies' pathway," directed by Marion's wild, arch, laugh.

Of all the various tribes of indistinct realities dimly revealed to, or dreamed of, by enthu-

siasts the romancers of our glen held most communion with the fairies ; wayward spirits, in conic caps, gold tunics, and red slippers, whose elements were twilight, moonshine, dew, and perfumes. Slauveen, as head of the glen-boys, was particularly noticed by these *etherial substances*. He knew every part of their establishment, their courts and kitchens, double-bedded rooms and stables ; and often was indebted to their bounty for a hot supper and night's lodging. To Helen and me, (the uninitiated in fairy mysteries,) his luminous description of these *visible invisibles* and their nimble exploits was perplexing ; but by Marion, (who would have dived to the earth's centre to embrace a Gnome, or into a volcano for one bright glance of Salamandrine,) these inklings of adventure with the tiny confraternity were received without the drawback of a single doubt.

I have announced myself a feeble, sickly boy, by accident debarred that exercise which might have corrected constitutional debility. My lameness rendered the rough ascents up which our rambles led, distressing. When I

would flag, Helen would sit with me to watch the cloud-shadows sweep across the mountain slopes, while Marion would pursue her upward course, swift as the shadow we were tracing, her guide outpouring his spirit lore for her instruction. Each fissure had its fairy tenant; each pinnacle enthroned a fairy queen; the broken crags that crossed the stream were fairy stepping stones; ravines were fairy bowers; some granite wrecks, rather gigantic for such appropriation, were fairy sugar-loaves; a neighbouring hill was "*hungry*," because the fairies fasted there; every pebble was awarded to these frolic gentles, and every turn of good or evil fortune. Whether you crossed the torrent featly or fell into its bed; whether you bravely climbed the steep or tumbled to its base, you still must thank the fairies, and answer their enquiries, sent in the hollow gust, the moaning breeze and waterfall.

It is cheering to think on one's young times, to muse on home, the home of childhood, the ingle nook, the pleasant tale, the merry argument, in which to differ took nothing from our mutual good will. Even my aunt's quaint

questions, breaking on Helen's story thus—  
“And how could Sir Amoric fight so well ten days without a dinner Helen?—and what did Lady Nesta do so long in that deserted place without a change of raiment?”—are now remembered with indulgence, and Quinny's trite interpolations are recalled with great abatement of displeasure.

This rock-bound home, though not my birth place, was the only home that I could well remember; and at a distance of many miles, and many years, remembrance still adheres to it. I see our cottage in the deep ravine; the old pear-tree shadowing the pond in which our merry ducklings floated; the *boreen* winding through the pass, the patch of meadow-land that pastured Lanty Maw; the byre and stack-yard, the turf-bank and potato-ridge which furnished labour to our needy clansmen. I see our study window, its diamond panes and leaden frame work; the narrow path, bordered by luxuriant broom which led through a green paddock to a mountain gap, a rent you would have thought was made for our convenience; it gave us prospect of a bay locked in by isles

and rugged hills, a seeming lake, whose waters, 'clear as sky, blend earth and heaven in one imagery.'

Beyond the gap a grassy tongue of land forced itself into the bay, as if eager to meet the babbling wavelets, while these, in turn, seemed with like affection to embrace the little headland and rippled lovingly beneath the cooling shadow of the alders that spread their sheltering arms on either bank. To stand upon the peak which towers above this point and look towards the bulwarks of the glen, you might imagine that volcanic fury had heaved up from earth's buried store, the shattered monuments of a former world, to choke up the little estuary. You might picture the chaotic tumult at its height; deep chasms angrily explode their rock-artillery; a sea of molten granite rolls on heavily; the flood is now up-reared to spread around its desolating tide; when lo! the resistless voice—"Be still!"—The surging waves are fixed and frozen into stone; patches of heath peep forth to beautify the rugged fissures, and giant masses are cemented, and forced to circle in, and to defend

from future tempest, this rescued armlet of the sea, this lonely, lovely inlet, now securely guarded by its frowning sentinels.

But its sweetest charm is lost, (sweetest at least to me,) its complete seclusion, its silence, undisturbed except by chartered guests; the wild children of the soil, the tenants of the heath-crowned hills. The fame of this glen has reached the multitude, and the kindly spirit of its owner has opened paths to its recesses; morasses are reclaimed; plantations fringe the precipices; causeways and roads, (those levellers of barbarism and romance,) are even now projecting; and we may one day see gay barouchettes and sociables, where formerly steep, narrow bridle-paths threw their unsocial, undiverging lines over bog and mountain; break-neck, swampy tracks, often devoted by Slauveen to the patching of Phil McGun, a giant engineer of wizard skill, reported to use spinsters' skulls for paving stones. These malisons commenced whenever he looked forward to convoying Quinilla to the brazier's city residence, a toilsome three day's journey of many halts, esteemed a penance by the in-



glorious Squire, and not much relished by his co-sufferer Lanty Maw.

Such were the defences which in Quinilla's day of juvenility preserved the glen and its inhabitants in primeval wildness and seclusion; and even when my sisters and myself emerged from childhood, the adventurers were few who broke upon the quiet of our dell, although a rude carriage road had then been formed. Sometimes a boat with a solitary stranger might be descried rounding the little island that shut us from a larger bay of which ours was but an armlet. Sometimes Slauveen would make a shining wonder of being asked the road to "*vallis aspera*." We saw in fact no *gentle-folk* except each other, and heard of none except of the *pigmy gentles*, and Mrs. Bullock's highest bred particulars.

My jubilees commenced with Quinny's leave takings, which I looked forward to, with eagerness intense.—Our cottage was too small to offer refuge from her clamour. The study, a parlour, a store-room, and a kitchen formed the lower range; the upper was as circumscribed; so that Quinilla's voice filled all



the space around us—it battled with the atmosphere!

I had another reason for not loving her—she had no love for me, and would now and then refresh me with some town-fangled jeer, significant of my infirmity; nor was she more complimentary to Marion. Helen was the only one on tolerance, although Helen rebutted quite as vigorously as Marion our cousin's vulgar jibes directed at my lameness; but there was something in my younger sister that even fools were forced into respecting; a calm energy of tone, an unpretending self-respect. It may be wondered how my placid uncle could harbour such a plague as Miss O'Toole, but had his wife admitted twenty plagues, bodied forth in twenty poor relations, my gracious uncle could not have mustered sufficient moral courage to dismiss them.

This was the single drawback on our happiness; bating the jostling of Miss O'Toole we moved on monotonously yet merrily within our little orbit, more occupied with the past than with the future, unless indeed with that futurity which is unchangeable. To this our

thoughts would often fly, and image Paradise ; my sketches of this after-state always described blue skies, clear lakes, and silence as profound as that enjoined by the Sage of Samos. I remember wondering, when a child, whether in the range of noiseless pleasure allotted to the just, books would be included, and whether, if the righteous members of the same earthly household were again to be united in a particular location of the heavenly, there was any chance of Quinilla's admission to our fellowship.

## CHAPTER III.

“ With graceful ease the maiden sprung  
Upon the prancing steed,  
And round the youth her arms she flung,  
And held with fearful heed.”

WINTER had expended its mists and storms and biting frosts. Spring was advancing. The sparry cone of *Sugar-loaf* glittered like frost-work. The snow had vanished from the rocks and dells, which now displayed a budding carpet of feathery heaths, sea-pinks, and mosses. Lizards, goats, and glen-boys, rejoicing left their coverts; the Fairies, eager for midnight revel, issued forth in hurtling crowds,

to seize upon a moon-beam;—but none of brute, or human, or mixed essence rejoiced half as much as I did; for Quinny's city season was approaching!—in two days she would depart!—I sat whole hours absorbed in reveries of delicious longing; my tremors ceased; my head no longer ached.—Quinilla spoke in tender semi-tones, shut up within her especial snug-gery, discoursing her apparel.

The robes were fitted on the fortieth time, meeting approval or reviling according as they suited her shape and her complexion. A ten years hoarded stock of bobbins, lace, and bugles, was brought out to add to the adornment, because the occasion was *quite* particular. My sisters and my aunt were, in due time, summoned up stairs to the council; indeed the taste of every one, including our maid Katy, my uncle, and myself, was at this important juncture held in requisition. I was so thunder-struck at her equipment that my utterance, (never flippant,) was cut off—"Oh my!" was all I said; a clasping of my hands told the unspeakable remainder.

Contrasted with Marion and Helen, Quinilla

moved a queen;—their garments of blue camel fashioned by my prudent aunt, their untamed, unplumed tresses, lowered, for once, their charms in my esteem, and made me think, with Katy, that they “looked like nothin” next to Miss O’Toole. I thought of Cleopatra on the Cydnus. My uncle stared as if he did not thoroughly see into the subject;—my aunt ejaculated—“Good gracious!—why Quinilla!”—Marion changed countenance so often that you could not tell whether she was delighted, frightened, or confounded; and Helen hoped that such a mass of plumes and petticoats might not be found extremely troublesome.

This more than ordinary embellishment our cousin had uncoffered to honor the majority of Theodore O’Toole, Esquire, her only brother, who had lately arrived at man’s estate and likewise an estate (entailed) of one hundred and forty pounds per annum. He had spent the first year’s revenue and two months of his valuable life in seeing life in London, and was expected to revisit his patrimonial lands the coming Autumn, to which season Mrs. Bullock had requested Quinilla would prolong her stay

in Cork. The merits of Theodore O'Toole, Esquire, were so elaborately imparted, that even my rapture at the prospect of this long deliverance could not ward off head ache. I slunk out unperceived, and tumbled over Patricius, who sat pondering on the lower stair. He never heeded my descent head-foremost, but grumbled out—"And so you went to see the rareeshew—my lady in full fig: she shan't fig me however!"

"You would not circumvent your mistress, good Slauveen"—said I—"The Spartan boys never—"

"Spartan," he repeated; "I'm neither Spartan nor soused-gurnet, to be made a laughing stock for Mrs. Bullock's shop boy."

"Patience Slauveen, patience," I remonstrated; "the ancient Helots were much worse off than—"

"*He Lots* are no affair of mine sir: my *she Lot* isn't matched by any man alive. Patience ershishin!—they may talk o' patience who never felt tight shoes!—How soft she is!—look *there*; them pumps were bought last year, and she shall buy my last years legs before I wear um for her."

“The Greeks wore soles and sandals,” I suggested; you can cut the uppers off Slauveen; a thong will serve for sandals.”

“But I’m no Greek, and so I won’t be spancelled, Master Walter.”

Slauveen was in his dogged mood; if he determined that the shoes were short, no argument of mine could lengthen them. Quinilla’s jaunt might be postponed, perhaps put off entirely!—He went on.

“I’m to be harnessed with this like any garron, too, may be I am!” He jerked from his fob a red leather belt, with an appendant bright steel buckle cut in glittering facets, and dangled it contemptuously. Quinilla’s pug, a brute she got from Mrs. Bullock, came barking and jumping at the buckle: Slauveen caught up the dog, and bound the belt around its middle, keeping his victim passive by a sympathetic whine—“Every one that sees us stops to hiss us” he continued. ‘Watch her wig,’ will you says one—‘watch her boots,’ says two—‘clear the way,’ says three, ‘her skirt’s on fire!’—and then the glen lads hallow ‘fire, fire, fire!’ till I’m downright ’shamed o’both of us and Lanty kicks up behind and spangles us wid



spatters—I won't go, so I won't—I'll swear that Lanty Maw have got the staggers."

In vain I coaxed and argued, Slauveen by kissing the back of his hand, affixed his irrevocable seal to the averment that he would neither convoy Quinny nor her knapsack.

While this debate was pending Miss O'Toole tested the *accurate fit* of each particular robe she drew from her repository : the whining of her tight-swathed favorite diverted her from the momentous question, whether a blue stomacher would match the canary gauze, then under revision. I marked the full pause in her illustrations, and tried to drag away the mulish whelp: even at the instant, severe in youthful beauty, Quinilla issued from her snuggery—

"Is any body callin', Master Walter?" said Slauveen, "I'm bothered with a singing in my ears; it must be Katy sure;—comin' Katy" and off he stalked.

"Patricius," screamed my cousin, "back with yourself this moment: come back I say or—"

The culprit reappeared—"speak," screamed my cousin—"answer—who put that waistband on my pug?"

"Well," cried Slauveen, surveying his preceptress, and clapping his hands in ecstasy—"What a *gownd*! what an enticing *gownd* Master Watty!—Is that a curricie dress I wonder?—bangs Madam Bullock's all to tatters!"

"Patricius," said my cousin, touchingly; "repent and speak the truth; don't run ding dong to the deuce Patricius:—have you not *scrooged* up that poor, dumb, speechless innocent?—I'm always satisfied—as Helen says that Shakspeare says—with pure repentance—don't stand mum-chance—who put that waistband on my pug?"

"It wanted a bit of a stretch Miss Quinilla," said Slauveen; "it wouldn't meet at all at all; and now I know it fits me nicely—see yourself," he added, unharnessing the brute and girding his own waist with seeming satisfaction.

Notwithstanding this magical suspension of hostility, I felt some odd misgivings touching Lanty Maw. Slauveen might still redeem his vow by gifting his Bucephelas with staggers. Two days, two mortal days, still threw their lengthy shadows on my sunshine—I was now, at seventeen, more covetous of noiseless pursuits than even in my days of sickly childhood.

Quinilla had lately multiplied her powers of tormenting by regaling us with pathetic recitations from the Speaker—the standard book at Mrs. Bullock's—A delicious summer hung upon Slauveen's sincerity—it was a perilous hold!—At night I stole into the shed which housed our cow and Lanty; I coaxed the sulky animal; I no longer blamed the tyrant who made his horse a consul: had I the power, if Lanty bore off his burden gallantly, he should be stalled an Emperor!—there was no symptom of the threatened staggers—the next night came, and passed away—the animal shewed no illness, but ill-humour. He was duly harnessed and led up to the door. I stood on tenter-hooks with my anxious sisters. The errant-lad was seated; the luggage-pack was carefully strapped on; Maw stretched out his long neck and snorted; the damsel mounted; Maw kicked, and kicked as he had never kicked before; Quinilla caught at Slauveen's gorgeous waistband; the belt gave way; we screamed and Katy whooped—our cousin was sprawling in the duck pond!

Oh! to depict the clamour consequent on this disaster!—the elements of every jarring

horror seemed combined in one loud, lengthened diapason ! the frightened ducks kept up a chromatic qua-ake, Quinilla a sort of shrieking recitative, through which no element of speech could be detected, save "hound ! cheat ! humbug !" applied to Lanty Maw, or to Slauveen, or both.—Katy's contribution to the concert was given in pathetic touches from base to treble and back again—Pug barked incessantly. The glen-boys, uproused by the din, came whooing and hurrooing to see "what *soort* o' fun was goin' on," and lend a hand to make bad worse. The mountain echoes, or the fairies, took up the note.

But high above every stentor of the chorus arose Slauveen's surpassing *pillalu* ! he roared as if a tiger rampant were before him, while Lanty Maw kicked 'fast and furious.' Lanty indeed was the only *actor* of the party ; no one attempted to fish Quinilla from the duck-pond ; the magnitude of the misfortune had paralysed all powers but the vocal : even the glen-boys, when once the game was under fair espial, stood stock still, like other Irish boys in cases of emergency, content with adding their com-

plement, to the aboriginal melody of Slauveen. Thus our cousin lay struggling in an omnium of fetid water, ooze, and duck-weed, not unlamented, though unaided—I could have wept my eyes out, but I was ague-struck and rooted to the spot. My sisters, finding they could not reach the sufferer, (who from injudicious floundering had floated from the bank,) and seeing us staring, shrieking, and inactive, fled into the house for succour. Slauveen was still astride on Lanty. This last, like one bewitched, kept echoing the plunges of Quinilla, perhaps incited by the unnatural concert. Even at this moment I am unable to decide whether the hardened beast performed his ruthless caprioles from fright, from wickedness prepense, or from the instigation of Slauveen.

My aunt and uncle now came forward.

“What’s the matter Walter?” said my uncle, “what is the matter?—Is Quinilla hurt?”

“Is Quinilla killed?—speak Katy!” said my aunt—“we can’t hear our ears through all this clitter-clatter.”

“And sure she might as well be kilt as have

her darling dress knocked down and murdered," bellowed Katy.

My uncle reprimanded our idle *helps*. Quinilla was hooked out, but her haggard plight awakened such compassion that a spontaneous repetition of the preceding chorus was elicited. —Katy thumped her breast, Lanty recommenced his outrageous plungings. Every fresh inspection of Quinilla's person drew forth a wilder *ullaloo*;

'Twas like "the roaring of a thousand streams."

Turning to escape I espied two strangers at a little distance, curiously peering at the group, which hung in diversity of attitude around the luckless Miss O'Toole. That these were of good degree was manifest, but I was dubious whether they belonged to Marion's class of cavaliers or to Mrs. Bullock's. They bowed on finding they were noticed: I returned their courtesy and stammered an awkward explanation of the scene. My story did not meet the sympathy I had reckoned on; they were not the least overcome by my description of the fall; nay one of them, the handsomest too



seemed very much inclined to laugh. From this behaviour I at once inferred that *he* at least, belonged to the mongrel gentry. Marion's cavaliers were noted for urbanity to maidens in distress, and no ancient heroine I had heard of, ever found herself in more distressful plight than did that unhappy one, who was now extended, apparently senseless, on the bank, her riding dress distilling the aroma of the ill-odoured poppy.

An opening in the line of mourners gave her completely to our view. The handsome youth was choking with laughter ill-suppressed; I reddened at this impertinence; his companion with a rebukeful look, which rather tended to encrease the other's struggles, apologised.—They had been coasting round the bay, he said, and had been tempted by the beauty of the little cape which jutted from our dell, to land and to explore. A cry, which they had mistaken for the national keene, had led them into the ravine: they were strangers, and hoped their error would be pardoned.

There was something wonderfully pleasing in the young man's aspect who thus graciously



tried to cover his companion's levity : the excess of my desire to say something extremely civil, kept me silent. Our conversation had been carried on at a short distance from the scene of wo ; the clamour had sunk into a buzz of objurgation at the unsusceptible Lanty Maw, who, now disencumbered of his freight, was passing his maligners, wisely betaking himself to the shelter of his stable from the thrashings he was menaced with.

" Would nothin' sarve ye, you confounded brute," obtested Katy, " but you must fling the jewel, flump, into the muck-pond ? I'll be bound ye wouldn't fling *yourself* there !"

" Didn't I tell you," cried Slauveen, " the sulky garron would never stand that feather ? —Oh ! Miss Quinilla, Miss Quinilla, had you been said by me you'd ha' put the feathers up into the pack."

" And ruined 'um," roared Katy.—" they'd ha' been scrumpled all to nothin' !"

" They're scrumpled with a vengeance now !" retorted he.—" We can't change the nature of a baste nor a plum puddin', nor wiser than we are, Katy Mulligan : of all

colours in the sky Lanty could never cotton much to scarlet; split the feather! it made him take poor Miss Quinny for a trooper."

"Wretch!" cried Quinilla, starting from her trance and from the arms of my aunt and Katy,—“Nit of mischief!—Maw took me for a trooper did he?—Cheat, abominable cheat, you'll rue the day you loosed that buckle!"

"Crommell be kind to us!" ejaculated Slauveen, "she heard me through an' through the faint!—I'd as soon ha' thought o' hearin the hair grow upon our cow's back!"

At this turn of the catastrophe, which introduced Quinilla, *viva voce*, the rude young man leaned back upon a crag, pulled out a scented handkerchief and laughed until the tears coursed down his cheeks. I thought this barbarous, for our cousin looked quite shockingly—without her hat, her frills and curls rilling unwholesome drops, her face begrimed! there was one horrid smear which made her mouth seem double. The gentlemanly youth fain would have departed, but the other could not stand upright from laughter, while poor Quinilla gabbled like the ducks she had disturbed, and

Slauveen, finding disavowal non-availing, stood reckless, blinking at the sun. Her rage was waxing fearful, and the young man's mirth encreasing in proportion, when Marion and Helen, who had been searching in my aunt's repository for a grand specific in hysterical or fainting fits, came flying to Quinilla.

No word I know of can express the sudden smoothing of the laughter's features, or the gaze denoting more than wonder which he fixed upon my sisters, while they tried to soothe our cousin. But Quinilla was intractable; every fresh glance at her rueful riding dress, every reminiscence of her expecting Mrs. Bullock, every tender thought of Theodore O'Toole, Esquire, drew forth hot tears and hot reproaches.—“In three days I should have been in Cork—dressing for Mrs. McCarthy's drum!—Mrs. Bullock was to send her *horse and cart and featherbed* to meet me at the five mile bridge; she will think that I am dead!”

“Or drowned in Lough na Paistha!” interpolated Katy.

“Look at my habit, Helen—ruined!—look at my hat—destroyed!—Oh! my feather, my

feather, what an object!—Look at my yellow boots—Where's my pearl broach?—'Twould fret a saint!—Look at my frill too!—Let me alone Miss Marion; I'd rather be boxed, than be bothered to compose myself!—my hat, my habit, my frill, my boots!"—and down she sank despairing.

At the touching enumeration of her losses—which I thought irremediable, and consequently considered the long dreamed of journey utterly hopeless—I was myself not far from shedding tears, and looked with some anxiety at the gentlemanly stranger for correspondent sympathy; but to my amazement the rude one, now, appeared as deeply interested in Quinilla's woes as I was. He started from behind the point of rock which had partly hidden him and his companion, and with a demeanour quite respectful, yet looking also quite secure of welcome, he walked up to my uncle and announced himself without the slightest tinge or hesitation—His name was Sanford, his friend's was Fielding; they were artists on a pleasurable and he hoped a profitable tour; their sketches of the bay and glen

were just completed—they intended visiting a wild pass and lake which lay nearly in the route, the lady, (he bowed profoundly to Quinilla,) had spoken of pursuing—they had hired a vehicle which awaited them at the other side of the bay, by which arrangement Cork might be reached in less time than she had named, would she condescend to accept their escort.

My uncle, though looking at the suppliant, was busy with the siege of Potidea; he collected his ideas for reply, but my aunt on this occasion thought herself entitled to be spokesman.—The young man's offer was extremely civil, wonderfully civil, to people he could know nothing at all about; he would excuse her, however, for demurring—she didn't doubt he was a respectable young gentleman—but—

Here our cousin interposed with smiles and curtsies—She was so *obleege*d so very much *obleege*d: the generous proposal had sunk into her heart; but the unlucky accident occasioned by her footman's negligence, had made her such a figure! she blushed at being seen in such a trim!—her only fashionable riding dress was unfit at present for the city.

Here Katy thought *her* word would slip in aptly—Cork was the finest place on earth for scourers—two dips would send the skirts out o' the vat as good as new; Miss O'Toole had better snap the young man's offer; second thoughts were dangerous; the drum dresses were safe, thank goodness! in the luggage-pack; Miss Helen would lend her a hat and cloak good enough to ride with picture sellers, this last was added *sotto voce*.

While thus Quinilla and the cook harangued, I saw by the twitching of the young man's mouth that he was strongly tempted to another outbreak, but now I felt less angry. The gravest preacher of decorum might indeed have been moved to mirth at Quinilla's softened tone and queenly gestures. Forgetting her extraordinary appearance, which Helen was vainly trying to improve, she simpered, curtsied, waved her hand, and made such odd contortions, that I imagined she had caught the quinsey. Meantime my aunt and uncle were in sober conference standing apart—"Strolling picture dealers!" said my aunt thoughtfully; "he has by no means a poverty-stricken look



—see how his companion stands so sheepishly aloof—there's something of a snigger I don't like—did you remark his shewy ring?"

"Ah Laura," said my uncle, "I have known many a shewy fellow without a sixpence."

"True," rejoined my aunt; "he might be hungry, and all this palaver proceed from wanting a good dinner."

"Then give him one," exclaimed my uncle, and walked into the house.

My aunt approached the stranger, who during this debate had been politely overruling our cousin's faint excuses—She feared she might be troublesome—He vowed the trouble was imaginary; he could without the slightest inconvenience accommodate the other ladies too, if nothing but the want of a conveyance prevented their accompanying their—*mamma*—the last word was uttered dubiously.

Quinilla bridled—"cousin sir," said she, a little tartly; the blunderer apologised—"that discourteous mud had so disguised—"

"You had better go into the house Quinilla," said my aunt,—“a pretty nose you've got!—If you are bent on going, go to-morrow, and talk



the matter over with the young man after dinner."

The painter and Quinilla brightened at the invitation thus implied: she took his offered arm with a tender languid air, and tottered to the cottage. Marion, unconscious that the other arm awaited her acceptance, ran away. Wondering and rejoicing I hastened to include Fielding in the dinner invitation, better able to articulate, now that I understood he was nothing but a travelling picture-dealer.

When my uncle joined us at dinner he seemed to have forgotten the occurrence of the forenoon, and looked at the strangers as if requiring explanation. My aunt nodded twice to indicate we waited for the usual thanksgiving: this he uttered with an abstracted air, so contrary to the deep reverence with which he was accustomed to pronounce the name of God, that I regarded him with some uneasiness. His benevolence however soon prevailed over his transient discomposure: he was careful to supply his guests with the portion of the hungry, and listened complacently to the rattle of young Sanford, who replied with infinite

humour and patience to the thronging questions of Quinilla. She had, by direct interrogatory which no one could evade, ascertained that he was English, and had for cultivation of his talent visited Italy and Greece. I was longing to learn what town now stood upon the site of Sparta, but was foiled by our cousin. She was labouring to bring in Theodore O'Toole ; and something of London which fell from Sanford effected at last the lucky opening. By a rapid and masterly digression she led from the great metropolis to the young sprigs of Irish quality who visited London for pleasure or improvement. She ran through the whole history of Theodore O'Toole, Esquire, his birth, his breeding, his property entailed ; his descent from the ancient Tooles of Glendalough, his relationship to Sir Laurentius, his visit to London, his lavish expenditure, the expediency of nursing the proceeds of his estates, and his intended *come out* as a London fashionist at her friend Mrs. Bullock's. By this gratuitous confidence our cousin accomplished two ends ; she struck Sanford dumb at her family consequence, and displayed a fair sample of her

copious, animated delivery—She concluded with a winning entreaty that her new acquaintances, during their Cork sojourn, would consider themselves *at home* at Mrs. Bullock's.

All this time Fielding sat dumb as the dumb waiter, scarcely venturing to lift his knife and fork, suffering, (my aunt supposed) at finding himself stuck down among people so much above him. This *suppose* was addressed to Helen, whose attention had been hitherto engrossed by Sanford's miscellaneous pleasantries. Self-convicted of neglect towards the unpretending guest, Helen, by addressing him particularly, sought to encourage him into the ease and confidence of his gay associate. But nothing could raise Fielding to the tone of his companion; his replies were made with deference, while Sanford entertained Quinilla with the freedom of a perfect equal, and with phrases so equivocal, that I could not make out whether he was making love or laughing at her. From time to time he cast a glance at Marion, who sat opposite, either to draw her into greater familiarity, or to enlighten her on his ambiguous addresses to Miss O'Toole.

Marion however, though earnestly attentive to the words, seemed quite unconscious of the looks, and only once broke silence. Sanford was picturing the Bay of Naples: my uncle said something of Mount Pausilypus; the young man as courteously submitted to his host's digression as to Miss O'Toole's, and began to expatiate on the beauties of the mountain, when Marion interrupted him by anxiously enquiring whether it were equal to *Slieb Ghoul*. Even Fielding smiled at this national trait: his ready friend, with a meaning look and half bow, answered, "he had seen nothing any where which did not lose by comparison with what he had beheld in Erin's fairy land."

My uncle now rose abruptly—"Take away Katy," said my aunt—"these young men, I see, are anxious to be off."

The strangers took the hint. Sanford made a final satisfactory arrangement with Quinilla, and departed with his friend, promising to be in attendance on the morrow.

## CHAPTER IV.

“ And has he then failed in his truth ?—  
The beautiful youth I adore !”

I PASSED another sleepless night. Either apprehension had made me ungenerous, or there was really something in Sanford's manner, notwithstanding its plausibility, which justified my estimating his sincerity by the standard of Slauveen's. Of Fielding, who had made no profession whatever, my judgment was more favorable. I had agreed with Helen in thinking there was a decorum in his shyness more to be depended on than the gloss of his companion ; he seemed, to be sure, as mystified

as if he were regaling with Marion's aerial acquaintances, his humility encreasing with our condescension, while Sanford conversed with as much assurance as if he had been feasting with the glen-boys.—Marion had demurred at our sentence ; she could not explain why, except that an excuse for confidence might be found in personal attraction. The one artist, she observed, was better looking, the other not so good looking as Walter. My aunt decided that Sanford was smitten with Quinilla, and that a few meetings at the Bullocks would *clinch* the affair.

My uncle had forgotten the entire incident, and seemed moon-struck when appealed to on the subject. Quinilla, by a conscious simper, and an air of studied indifference, denoted that she had settled the business to her complete satisfaction, and Katy, inferring placability from the softened demeanour of Miss O'Toole, when she lighted us to our respective dormitories hoped we would say a good word for Slauveen. "The creature," she added, "is starved with the grief—never took a

morsel between his miserable teeth since the morning, and has half murdered Lanty Maw!"

I rose with the lark. The day was unpromising, and Sugar-loaf wreathed with a mist. Our breakfast was un-social—Marion looked anxious; Quinilla's flights were restrained by the clouds: Helen, too busy to speak, was sedulously adorning with gumflowers her own plain straw hat. My uncle seemed conscious that things were not keeping their usual smooth course; he swallowed his tea and retired to the study. My aunt fidgetted, pushed away her cup and hoped the young men would come early. A doubt of their coming at all had occurred, it appeared, to none but myself.

I withdrew to the window—Marion followed me.—"The haze thickens Walter; it will rain, —I am sure it will rain."

I looked dismal. Marion rallied.—"Slauveen however augurs a fine day: he quotes the ducks and pigs—their prelude to bad weather has not been given.—Look, there's a patch of blue!"

With a joyous laugh she turned to announce

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the happy omen, just as Fielding entered, followed by his friend. Involuntarily I echoed Marion's laugh, and rapturously shook the young man's hand, who looked startled at this warm reception. Quinilla was in a fever of delight ; she squeezed Sanford's hand as tightly as I did Fielding's, giggling—" And how d'ye do to day?—how kind to be so punctual!—I thought you'd never come—a lovely day—looks a little rainy—will you breakfast—do—we had best be off;—give me the hat Helen—what a dowdy!—How the Bullock's will all stare!—sit down—sit down—I'll just do my hair and be with you in a moment.—Sister, see that Patricius is in livery and ready to attend me."—Off she tripped.

The change in the deportment of the strangers very much surprised me. Sanford hung back, and Fielding took the lead ; not indeed with the free tone of his companion, but with the bland address which had captivated me on our first encounter. The familiarity which in one stood forth offensively, in the other was modestly, I may say gracefully insinuated ; he saluted all with equal cordiality and respect,

while Sanford, regardless of the mistress of the house, attached himself to Marion and Helen, venturing again, but more directly, to propose their accompanying Quinilla. Marion laughed in his face at the preposterous suggestion: Helen raised her eyes with an air of quiet astonishment; my aunt returned thanks for his civility, but assured him the *children* never quitted home.

One might have inferred from the stare of our new acquaintance that my simple aunt, instead of a reply, had propounded some abstract question. My sisters, in truth, although childlike, could scarcely be called children; the younger, Helen, was my senior by a year. My aunt now introduced a string of injunctions respecting Quinilla, to which the self-elected escort was completely silent, but which Fielding promised to observe, very respectfully bowing to a vague intimation that the friendly Mrs. Bullock might be found a convenient acquaintance.

In our commodious little dwelling neither bell nor gong was required to assemble the family, or call in the servants; my aunt, from

long habit, could at once pitch her voice to the exact note of summons for each of our circle ; she sounded a treble chord for Katy, a bass for Slauveen ; and the deep key now brought the *Esquire* upon the carpet. He appeared in a costume more than usually light, admitting air through sundry gaping apertures. The uncharitable would have surmised, from the uniform fashioning of the drapery into which his corduroy dittoes were torn, that they had been lacerated thus for effect, as also that, to compass some mysterious end, his countenance had been so obscured by bog-water or other indigenous dye-stuff as to lose its pretensions to the human.

“What a pickle !” cried my astonished aunt.—“Put on your livery—make haste—make haste Slauveen ; put on your livery.”

“’Tis on,” said Slauveen.

“On !—and what tore it pray ?”

“The cow,” said Slauveen.

“The cow !—and what blacked your face ?”

“The fright,” said Slauveen.

“The fright !—what fright ?”

“Miss Quinny’s—her disasther took away

my color; I'm very poorly—thought myself the live-long night a bunch o' barley-corn an' Lanty Maw a munching me."

"Rogue," said my aunt, "you can color a story still; put on Master Walter's cast-off pepper and salt—make haste."

The dialogue now became serious; Slauveen's every shift was worn out; he was reduced to bare-faced disobedience, and stoutly declined attending our cousin. Miss Quinny couldn't want him to 'tend on her *now* she had two tight lads at her tail. Who knew but them painters would turn out a pair o' pick-pockets—Miss Quinny might afford a wrinkle in her character, but what had *he* to live on but his little bit o' character?—he had nothing on earth but his character, and he wanted to keep it.

My aunt, shocked at inuendoes which so shamelessly glanced at our guests, rated Slauveen very roundly—I stole a look at them, anticipating their wrathful appendix, but they seemed diligently examining the carpet. Our recreant Esquire was twirling his thumbs, as if deeply impressed by my worthy aunt's homily,

when Quinilla was heard—"Be careful of poor pug Katy—Does the cloak look shabby?—The hat is rather motherly isn't it?—Give Patricius the vallise."

She entered with the prettiest flurried air imaginable, but recoiled, dumb-stricken, at sight of the betattered Esquire.—"Patricius!" she exclaimed.

"Miss Quinilla," drawled Slauveen, the corners of his mouth curving upwards like an idiot's—"did you want me Miss Quinilla?"

"Want you Sir—I *suppose* so indeed."

"I thought you wasn't *sure* you wanted me," he retorted "and so I gave up goin. Good bye, Miss Quinilla—bright be your eye in a fog!—May we never lose you but where we'll find you.—*sonuher huth*! a good husband to you, Miss, soon an' suddent."—He had been shuffling to the door, he now made a dart and exit.

"Sister," cried Quinilla, "will you tamely endure such rebellion!—The O'Tooles to be brow-beaten by half naked rabble!—to be bearded by boys! as Cato says."

"Madam," said Sanford, rising, "I admire

your firmness, your fecundity of argument; the reptile deserves lapidation: I have been myself, so heart-wounded by the caitiff's insinuations, reflecting on *my* honor madam, and on *your* discretion—base hints which must have awakened in the bosoms of your friends suspicions of the purity of my intentions—that I am compelled, with the bitterest regret, to relinquish the honor of attending you.”

It would be difficult to say which looked most crest-fallen at these words, my cousin or myself—Quinilla recovered first—“It is not for me to draw back at such a juncture, Sir,” said she, loftily; “such proceeding would argue unpardonable caprice—ingratitude—worse than the winter’s tooth, wouldn’t it Helen?—What!—I suspect the honor which breathes in your every lineament—never Sir!—I deliver myself to your guardianship with unsophisticated trust—I am ready to attend you to the boat Sir, and Katy shall carry the valise.”—She extended her hand with winning benevolence, but nobody took it.

Sanford kept retreating to the door, stammering excuses and regrets, vituperating



Slauveen as the cause of the bitterest disappointment he had ever experienced. I groaned, and was giving the matter up, when Fielding came forward.—“Madam,” he said, taking Quinilla’s hand, still awkwardly stuck out as if palsied by pure consternation.—“Madam, you have been solicited to accept our escort; I solicit you still: I promise to conduct you to your friends.” He turned to us.—“You may feel secure of your relative’s safety; my sister should not be more strictly protected.” He put Quinilla’s arm within his, shook hands with my aunt and me, bowed to my sisters, and not omitting to leave his adieus for my uncle and thanks for his hospitality, he quitted the room and the house before I had recovered from my panic-fit. He was followed by his friend, who was followed by Katy, bearing the vallise. I had the discretion to hasten after, and attend them to the point, still dubious of the ultimate result. I watched the boat until it lessened to a speck, while Katy kept bawling behind me.—“Mind the luggage—mind the luggage Miss Quinilla—there’s more rogues than are hanged in the world—keep all your eyes about you *avoorneen*.”



## CHAPTER V.

A cheery board, a cozie hearth,  
A joke for rough and sunny weather,  
A conscience clear o' coil, are worth  
The *gowd* of à the *warld thegither*.

How often during the more serious incidents of my after life have I thought on this adventure; on the importance with which I had invested an accident, ridiculous and apparently inconsequential; on the even current of that happiness which a straw like this could interrupt, and on the extreme selfishness which—to gratify a morbid desire for uninterrupted devotion to purposeless studies—led me to rejoice at the folly of our poor cousin in thus committing herself to total strangers!

On what seemingly inavertible occurrences sometimes hang our happiness and misery ; yet if we dispassionately trace to their sources those evils, which, from an overweening self-approval, we are disposed to consider inevitable consequences of pre-ordination, we shall find that most, if not every case of mischance might have been averted, at the very least mitigated, had we held in subjection our selfish influences, and summoned the higher powers of our nature to draw up our rule of action. Had I upon this occasion controlled my besetting weakness, and called upon my uncle to dissuade Quinilla, the evils attendant on her giddy adventure certainly had been avoided.

For some moments I did not believe that our cousin was gone ; my vision was charmed ; it gave to me twenty returning boats and twenty Quinillas !—I turned towards home—her voice was behind me !—I entered the house, looked around, listened—she was gone ! actually gone ! not for a month as heretofore, but for three, perhaps for more !

My aunt's bustling interrogatories assailed me—What did I think of Quinilla's going ?

did I think the men respectable? she hoped no *row* would ensue, but she had an odd suspicion that something was wrong, from their looks at each other; they might both be in love with Quinilla.

I stared, and quoted Sanford's behaviour.

"All pretence," said my aunt; "such stratagems are common in love—sheer mummery! How *chop-fallen* Sanford looked when Quinilla accepted his friend! Fielding was ready enough—there is certainly something uncommon about her."

And now our little household sank into that heart-satisfying peace which leaves you without words to express your enjoyment. There are days of one's life for which we would readily exchange many of our years, days into which an age of happiness seems crowded; such days were mine at this period of my history; my own and external nature in wondrous harmony; the skies were red, the torrents hushed, the wild flowers bright, and I caught a healthful spirit from the softened atmosphere.

No premonitory tingling now heralded the shock inflicted by Quinilla's battery, for a day

or two indeed, I had, merely from habit, occasional starts and twitches. Marion and Helen felt, though perhaps with less intoxication, the comfort of a quiet home, a quiet ramble. The little headland was my chosen lounging place; there would I read and watch the trout springing at the may-fly, or lying like myself in blissful stillness.

How memory loves to picture this little cape! conjuring up the bay's enchanting panorama, its isles, its shady nooks, the fairies' rock-stair, garnished with holly, myrtle, and arbutus, down to the level of the dark red moor; the spring winding through fringy shrubs or bubbling over variegated pebbles, and leaping from a little promontory to meet its fellow stream upon a lower mound, both there uniting, and trickling from a heath-bank to the bay.—The soothing music seems restored of gentle showers plashing on the alder-leaves, the buzz of startled bees, the murmur of a far off cataract. Here I wondered and I worshipped, as in a vast sequestered temple, an earnest votary.

At some distance from our retreat was an

Island crowned with a dilapidated mansion, approachable at low water by a bank of uncemented stones. On the main-land side this insecure causeway communicated with a rough pass, leading by a toilsome ascent to the deep recesses of a tarn or lough, which nature had amused herself by scooping in the summit of a rock. Thence issued a brawling rivulet, high banked with copse, and bordered by a foot-path, which, fluctuating with the windings of the channel and with the undulations of the moor land, now sinking to the level of the stream, now rising to the height of the embankment, terminated abruptly at what Slauveen denominated a *fairy table*, projecting a few feet beneath the brow of a cliff. On this romantic site was perched a hut or *sheeling*, hedged in by a low rocky parapet. The rivulet having gathered in its course a thousand springs—here became contracted, and, with the force of a rapid, dived into the matted foliage beneath; its descent was almost hidden by a profusion of larches and other trees, which shot out from the steep rocks of either bank. The stream again appeared at various intervals,

now swift, now creeping, tracking the brow. heath, or tumbling from a precipice, until it forced a passage to the bay. The hut looked down upon this stream, and was but a short mile from its source. Beheld from the bay, through a chasm in the nearer hill boundary it looked like the nest of an eagle. It had been built by a herdsman who had pastured his half-tamed flock upon the mountain, and was now the home of his widow, Grace, or as we used to call her Granny McQuillan, the mother of Slauveen and the witch of our glen.

To this eyrie and its inmate Marion had been early introduced. Grace and her citadel were exactly suited to my sister's appetite for fairy-lore. Grace could foresee famine and peril in the signs of Heaven, make hills and streams divulge descent of rain, and read in the nocturnal luminaries, as in an almanac, omens portentous of good or evil hap.—Our cottiers consulted her horoscopy, their wives her chiromancy: each nail-spot was a symbol of past, present, and to come; by her divination daughters in the candle saw a wedding-



ring or winding-sheet, and sons decided whether the splinter bouncing from the fire promised a purse of gold, or head broke at a *pattern*. She could adjudicate a cause without a lawyer, detect a thief without a catchpoll, deliver laws and make them binding.—In short Grace was the Brehon\* of our rustics, a woman of marvellous endowments, or, rationally speaking, of observation and acuteness far above her class—not a repulsive witch, in sooty blanket, with sharp gray eyes, hooked nose and nails, brandishing, or riding on a broomstick—hers were full brown orbs, in which a waggish keenness twinkled through the stately gravity put on to suit her legislative and predictive functions. The face was a companionable face, experienced and demure—one that you could trust to for an echo of your laugh; one that when you said a clever thing would reciprocate your wink; a countenance that kindled into youth when she dealt out her *pisheroquest*† of houses *once so ancient*, chronicles of the

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\* Brehons. Lawgivers of the ancient Irish.

† Long stories.



great O'Sullivans. Not even Helen could tell a story like her ; she fixed you to one posture, your eyes upon her face, your mouth agape to gather in the wonders, for fear your ears might not be wide enough. Her tales of *Slua-shee*\* would keep you *croonkled* in her chimney nook for weeks and fortnights—Scheherazade was nothing to our *Shanachie*.†

The Irish peasant has a talent for invention, for beguiling you of credit, and extorting pelf and pity even from the morose and marble-hearted. People call it *humbug*—they may call it what they please ; no boor of other land can match it : 'tis a knack which keeps Pat lively when he is starving, the coin he often pays his rent with.

Dame McQuillan's sorcery was always well intentioned—the spirits she evoked were the better principles of human nature—the most suspicious and superstitious of her feudatories never laid to Grace's door the blight of crops or cattle, sore hearts or heads, or shiverings, or staggerings, or other Irish visitations and

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\* The fairy-host.      † Chronicler.

vexations.—Her herbary was culled to heal disease ; her wit was taxed to heal disputes ; her presages called on prudence to avert calamity. The squabbler wondered how she could foresee the bloody nose he brought home from the *faction* ; the idler, when his hay was swamped, remembered Grace McQuillan had forewarned him. She was the umpire in all affairs of *scrimmage* or *kick-up*, and frequently averted a *knock-down*. In cases of assault and battery she was the Jury who awarded damages —she saved many a broken heart by winning the inconstant swain, through terror of her judgment, to ratify the “hand and word” he had plighted to his sweetheart. The lady spouse by Grace’s interference oft escaped a drubbing ; the male came sober from his work, wisely making a *detour* to avoid Shamus Brady’s *public*, and the tempting savour of *scolteen*\* well mixed and *screeching* hot.

In virtue of her judicial dignity Grace thought herself entitled to depart from that

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\*A brewing of beer and whiskey, flavored with butter, eggs, sugar, &c.

happy negligence so conspicuous in the persons of our female peasantry—dishevelled ringlets unacquainted with the vexing comb; classic drapery of “woven wind,” disdainful of the vulgar wash-tub; feet spurning the tanned and Connamara coverings which would but hide their delicacy and impede their fleetness. Grace blended the Scythic with the more modern Irish costume; her saffron-tinted ‘kerchief was twisted conically in *birred* fashion above a well stuffed fillet, over which her shining hair was neatly rolled; her capuchin, (a short rug cloak of various colored stripes,) was edged around the throat with yarn fringe a foot in length, and fastened with a silver bodkin; a crosslet of like metal (exhumed by some fortunate disciple from a neighbouring bog) was pendent from a rosary to which all her followers had contributed a bead; her bright blue quilted petticoat of substantial fabric descended barely to her ankles, which last were cased in purple lambswool, adorned with scarlet clocks and stoutly soled; shoes she contemned as promoters of excrescences and subversive of free motion. In truth our witch

though nearly forty, might, with a spur, have outrun Atalanta. The holly wand she carried was not used for staff, but symbol of her functions. Grace partly owed her fame to her agility, which, assisting practised forecast, brought her in the nick of time to figure on the stage, falling as from out the moon into the middle of a convivial *scrimmage*, or standing, apparition-like before the married clown, and snatching the shillelah, uplifted at his lady-love, with which he was proceeding, tenderly, to *argufy* a matrimonial difference. Nor were Grace McQuillan's dress and practices more at variance with the national taste for neatness than were her house and *furnitory*.

But before I lead you to her audience-hall you must attend me to the cabins of our less gifted neighbours.—Divest yourself of all romantic associations; it is to no rose-mantled Elysium of rustic tenants I conduct you; no ivied porch awaits you; no woodbine clambers through the lattice.—Wade through that fetid bog; avoid the stagnant pool which settles at the threshold; stoop beneath the low browed-lintel and enter this hovel, reeking with soot,

and filled with bitter smoke, through which a sullen fire seems struggling for existence, even in the blinding cloud it has produced. View through your galled eyes the blackened walls, the naked rafters, the damp clay floor, the settle with its loathsome bedding and its wretched occupant; gaunt, feeble, starving, lifting his seared orbs to catch a ray of pity from the casual visitor. Alas!—that visitor must want a heart who could without a burst of sympathy behold the penury of an Irish hovel!—Look around—look at it well—think of your own children, healthful and joyous, seated at your board, sure of their portion of that substantial joint of which the poor Irish child can scarcely tell the name.—Look round a second time—recall the ruddy faces of your darlings, and then mark that pale, shivering babe, piteously gazing in the mother's face, a face from which misery has swept the human character!—Look at that squalid brood, snatching the garbage from the filthy tub—your fellow creatures grappling with brutes for offal, the carrion at which dogs would sicken!—Wonder not that if they grow, they grow into

the savage—already the wolfish impress is acquired, even in infancy, in prattling infancy—Alas! theirs is no prattling infancy; they are prematurely silent, prematurely old; they learn not to earn, but to despoil—the little hands that should have been taught to dig are lifted up to beg—the young lips that should have parted with a whistle to urge the lagging team, are opened but to whine “a halfpenny your honor, one halfpenny.” The jocund spirit and ready wit, imparted by a bounteous hand to lighten hardship, are perverted to over-reach and to extort, and sinewy frames and active intellects are early marred, which with better training might have “scattered plenty o’er a smiling land.”—May some nobler feeling be called forth in those whom curiosity first conducts into such a hovel!—may they co-operate with the wise and good in raising these neglected beings to the standard of humanity!—This is no high-wrought colouring, no passion-moving fiction; such were, and still to a great extent such are, the homes and aliment of Ireland’s peasantry.

But I have wandered from Grace McQuillan.



Marion's description of her granny had drawn Helen to Carrig-a-Phooka\*—thus aptly was the sheeling designated—and Helen had wheedled me to brave the horrors of exertion and an uphill ramble. The day appointed for my presentation to the Irish Pythia was sharp and wintry; I was then a wayward little urchin, wedded to my study-nook. I entered on the task with languor and repugnance; the gloomy roadway through the pass must have been projected by the far-famed Phil McGun to exemplify the line of beauty, by imitating the tortuous wriggings of an eel. Shivering and weary I rested on the fairy-table;—a table by the way more suited to a Titan—it held the witch's hut, her haggard, piggery, and poultry-yard, with an ample turf-kish, providently stocked. The blue smoke mounted cheerily from an aperture between the roof-tree and the gable. This gave me life, supported by my sister, to limp towards a wicket, which, obedient to Helen's command, given in pure Irish, flew open. I stepped over a high

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\* The fairy's rock-hold.



threshold, absorbed by visions of Eleusinian mysteries, in which a Hecate with her grim familiars darkly floated.—But oh, the fair transition to reality!—the comfort of the little chamber—the refreshment of a soft rush hassock to my sickly limb—the reviving glow communicated by a flood of sunshine streaming, through knotted panes of coarse green glass and lighting up the rustic treasures of this audience-hall!—a couch of plaited straw, a coverlid bleached upon and perfumed by the heather; a cupboard hospitably unclosed, displaying pans of goat's milk, and honey-comb so white and pure it seemed the store reserved for the queen bee.—A tapestry of rushes curiously interwoven, and strung with picture offerings of Saints, from Columba to St. Kevin hid the walls. The floor indeed, was of primeval rock, but the indentations had been filled up by the fairies or by Grace's indefatigable skill, and the cold was tempered by goat-skins and a patchwork of shreds and parings—the scraps rejected by the wasteful were here converted to a purpose, and nature's meanest gifts ingeniously employed. An inner room

disclosed a dresser garnished with pewter, serving for plates and looking-glasses ; a settle used for couch and wardrobe ; a spinning-wheel and wool-combs, (the sources of this wealth,) a three legged stool, (the tripod of the priestess) a cozy hearth on which a brindled cat sat purring ; a bright turf fire sending its lively sparkles to a cauldron linked on an iron hook which seemed to grow out of the chimney. The smoke in finding issue, infused its saving essence into the bacon-flitch that hung above the hob. All this array, with minor additaments as simple and as pleasant, was revealed ; the whole in correspondence with the presiding goddess, who, even while she welcomed us, plied fast her knitting-needles, puss now and then darting out a paw to clutch the dancing worsted-ball.

A few pounds would have purchased the cot and its contents, and yet it seemed to me that every comfort was assembled there, even to a book-shelf, though its freight was scanty—the Pilgrim's Progress, (aunt's donation) the Seven Champion's, Valentine and Orson, the Chronicle of Henry Marlborough, (bestowed

by Marion,) and some loose leaves on martyrology graphically illuminated—St. Bridgid most conspicuous, carrying beneath her arm her own head, grimly peeping from a *scraha*g.\*

Little wheedling was necessary to induce a second visit to the Sheeling. I never in my life felt happier, perhaps never quite so happy, as when basking on dame McQuillan's sunny window-ledge, with Bunyan in one hand, and a buttered slice of oat-cake in the other; my sick leg lifted carefully, and laid upon the softest hassock, while Grace promised a decoction of her brewing which if it *wouldn't cure* would *mend* it.

The little casement commanded a view unrivalled in our glen, often diverting my attention from Christian and Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. Beneath the window-ledge the rock receded boldly half way to the base, and then again advanced, sloping to the bottom of the dell; the seams and fissures of the precipice were garnished with wild myrtle, wavy osiers, club moss, arbutus and holly. At the foot of this

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\* Potato basket.

declivity the rivulet I have already pictured, increased by many mountain tributaries, toiled among rocks and reeds to a short distance, then dived precipitously through crags and roots of trees, emerging at intervals like a line of light. The opposite bank displayed a self-erected amphitheatre of larches, and stag-headed oaks whose antlers glittered in the spray flung upwards by the fall. A broad deep chasm in the mountain boundary, sweeping to the bottom of the dell, revealed the distant bay, its woods and silvery coves, with a side prospect of the Island distinguished by the ruin and the causeway.

Grace was not an eleemosynary witch; she levied no contributions, although her *villeins* would have willingly subscribed their mite towards her housekeeping, which they firmly believed the fairies had a hand in. The inert and thriftless are sceptical of the vast returns of industry; they cannot realize those fractions which often form the basis of the prosperity vulgarly imputed to good luck—therefore our mountaineers ascribed their witch's well-doing to the favor she found with the *good people*.

What kept her clothes so new?—By what, but a fairy-stroke could all *thim* snippets come together for a carpet?—She had always a bit of *baccy* for old Mike!—she bought blind Johnny all the duds he carried—Where did the money come from?—Sure Jock McQuillan left his *Widya* but a *modicum*! a taste o' wool, a quarter of a leaky boat; may be he might leave a sheep or two, or an old sow—that would go a *poor* way to *purvide* for old an' blind an' cover the bottom of the meal kist!—No—'twas sure as death the fairies, an' good luck to um! had lent a hand to furnish Carrig-a-Phooka.

It was from Dame McQuillan that Helen had acquired the rudiments of usefulness, the tact to serve her fellow creatures. Improving on her teacher's system of reclaiming *adults* by awakening wonder, and forcing superstition to aid in the reform, she sat about preventing barbarism by instructing *juvenals*, imparting to the young the knowledge best suited to their wants and to the counteraction of their most sturdy despot, indolence.—An arduous task!—but Helen was not easily discouraged. The tiny idlers of the glen were gradually lured

from sprawling in the pig-sties, to exercising in the island-ruin I have mentioned, in which Helen had established what she called her baby-house. The children were soon accustomed to her tutelage and emulous in obedience.—It was beautiful to see the little stupid faces brightening with intelligence as she explained her scripture apologue or told her well-spun baby figment.—Instruction stole upon amusement, introducing novel play-things; wool-combs, a spinning-wheel which served for the whole class, shuttles, and knitting needles. These were cheap and easily attainable through Dame McQuillan, who journied with the products of her labour once a month to the next town. Books for such novices were not procurable, and had they been, Helen had not the means of purchase; her books were in the trees, the stones, the running brooks; she taught the children in their native tongue, and taught them well; they learned to work, to weed, weave rushes; to name the various herbs and use them, to tie up their elf locks and wash their faces. Judging by these pigmy essayists I should decide



that the most puzzling riddle for a child lies in the adage—"truth is wisdom." These tyros in morality seemed to possess intuitive conviction that falsehood was the surest shield in all extremities; but even this grand problem Helen had simplified to their capacity, and she was proceeding soberly to christianize our little heathens, when Quinilla, who had an aptitude for intermeddling, tracked my sister to her haunt, and spoiled all. She *would* assist; she had tried her plan upon the little Bullocks—Mrs. B—would have had her publish it; the little B's could spout whole speeches from the Speaker. She would undertake to teach that blue-eyed little girl "blow winds and crack your cheeks!" in no time.—The frightened children flew helter-skelter, like wild bees; no coaxing could collect the hive, until the bugbear would betake herself to Mrs. Bullock's.

Even the benefit I derived from Dame McQuillan's lenitives was interrupted by this living bur; she was always at my heels when I wished to sneak off to the sheeling. Just as I thought I had escaped her. the scream *in all* of "Watty, why—why, Master Watty, can't you



as well go easy Master Watty?" in one unmodulated monochord, would set my heart beating five hundred in a second. The candid will no longer wonder I rejoiced that we were rid of her.—She was not a plague—not *one*—she was ten thousand !

## CHAPTER VI.

“ Yes, there are times and there are places  
When flams and old wives tales are worth the graces.”

AND now our interrupted blessings, (never fully valued until suspended,) were renewed—our mornings in the study, our rambles to the head-land, our visits to the sheeling and the Island-ruin, whither Helen once more endeavoured to decoy her half-tamed covey. The little brood at first was quite intractable, but one recovered stray would lure a second, and so on, till the callow nest again sent forth its

lispings. Marion was too volatile to aid the breaking-in; her presence was the signal of frolic and confusion; she would pat the diligent, coax the sullen, laugh while the delighted group would shout in noisy chorus, entangle worsted, flax and rushes, and scamper off to Carrig-a-Phooka. Grace doted on her—Marion was her idol, until Helen stole in and shared her adoration. She called my sisters the *fair-haired* and the *dark-haired* Geraldines, and they soon became thus distinguished by every native of our glen.

Nor did such apparently familiar epithets trench on that devotional respect accorded to us. The prefix to our name was seldom expressed, nor yet the derogatory terms "Miss" and "Mister." My uncle was *The Geraldine Mor*, a Thane more loved than dreaded. My sisters were looked upon as beings of a superior essence, creatures between the angel and the fairy; though descended from the *Fitzes*, the *Sassanah* despoilers, no *rale* Milesian Princess of the *Rig Damna*\* ever received more homage

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\* Royal stock.

from her Kerns and Galloglasses. Nothing extraneous or factitious elicited this reverence ; their dress, in neatness only, was superior to our cottiers' daughters of the better class—rug cloaks, straw hats, a camlet vest and petticoat—and yet Quinilla, one of the *old sort*, one of the *big O'Tooles*, arrayed in the glowing splendour of prismatic brilliancy, her garments fashioned by the Bullock mantua-maker, after the first wild stare at her equipment, passed on without the slightest notice ; while at sight of Marion and Helen our rustics, with a whoop which might have roused the seven sleepers, would toss up their brimless hats, *hurrooing* for the Geraldines.

The incidents of early days are more present to my imagination than occurrences less remote and trivial. My thoughts involuntarily wander to the past. I would rather describe the simplest object and event connected with those days, than enter on the subsequent pages of my story. I am given to linger on the sunny points and loth to set foot within the cloudy region. The periods antecedent and directly subsequent to Quinilla's adventure, are like luminous pencil-

lings on a gloomy landscape. At this time all was sunshine; the evening that closed upon our happy day, was a joyous wind-up, particularly if it brought with it just that chilly feel which countenances a fire in June, and feet upon the fender. The current in my veins flowed languidly; I was as susceptible of cold as clamour; therefore one chimney corner was always assigned to me; my uncle occupied the other; Marion and Helen, linked arm in arm to fit the vacancy, were wedged between us, the latter freighted with a story. My aunt was far too thrifty to let an East wind make her idle; she had not *time* to feel cold; between her and us was placed a small round table, bearing lights, and household stuff which “wanted looking over”—while Helen kept her immediate auditors mute as marble effigies, fearful lest a cough or splinter-fall should interrupt the tale, my aunt rattled her shears and bodkins, snuffed her long sixes, hunted for her thimble, and laughed when she should have cried, protesting at every pause the story was enchanting, though she seldom heard a word of it.

How happy were we all! how cheery flew the peat-sparks! Tea was my nectar, yet I dreaded Katy's entrance with the tray and kettle. With every winding of her sister's tale would Marion's color vary; her eyes were bright or tearful as if her own fate hung upon the heroine's. It was this innocent abandonment of self, this credulity, this perpetual play of feeling and of feature, which gave Marion her exquisite grace; her voice was low and tremulous, her idiom playfully national, and a slight lisp imparted to her utterance the charm of infancy. Helen's tones were rich and musical; there was a spirituality in her countenance as indescribable as her sister's mutable expression; she was tall, and would have been commanding but for a bending half-retreating air, adding to gracefulness what it took from dignity. Marion was the soft and childlike daughter of Virginius—Helen was the Grecian daughter.

Our cousin had been gone a week, which seemed but one bright summer day, and we were seated, as I have described, around the fire: my aunt was busied with patchings in-

terminable, and Helen was spinning a legend of Cape Clear, a wild district lying near our glen. We thought ourselves secure from interruption, for tea was over, and in an agony of pleasure were pursuing the heart-rending adventures of a persecuted heroine, when Katy entered with what, in one of us at least, awakened more excitement than the story—a letter. —My uncle's only acknowledged correspondent was his agent, whose letters, "short and far between," had always to be sent for, to a post town some miles off. The period of remittance was still distant; therefore the letter could not be from him—so said my aunt—neither could it be from Mrs. Bullock, who never wrote but to her sister; nor was it likely that Quinilla should have broken through her prudent rule of saving postage, ink, and paper, by keeping her adventures for description, and writing only to announce her return.

"Who brought the letter Katy?"

"A horse an' man Ma'am."

"A horse and man!—where from?"

This Katy could not tell, attesting only that they went off again like thunder.



My aunt wiped her spectacles and looked with all her might at Katy, holding the letter unopened in her hand. Katy's wide eyes reciprocated the puzzled stare. Helen suggested the expediency of breaking the seal, adding, "I hope nothing unpleasant has happened to Quinilla."

"Or to her currie dress and all her lovely clothes!" cried Katy, "wisha then make haste—ma'am, I'm all of a twitter, like a mouse's tail!"

My aunt turned the letter from side to side, as if determined to *guess* at its contents.

"Have you read it, Laura?" said my uncle quietly.

"Read it?—No Fitzgerald, 'tis for [you: such an odd seal, with a cow in the middle and queer looking letters—Greek I suppose."

"They are German," said my uncle, taking the letter more hastily than I had ever seen him take any thing before.

"German!" ejaculated my aunt, clasping her hands—"is she coming at last?"

But my uncle was deep in the letter. Katy having picked up her mistress's thimble,

finding no off-hand excuse for remaining, withdrew. The letter was read and carefully placed in a pocket-book. My aunt looked impatient. My uncle wistfully gazed at the fire, as if he deciphered familiar countenances in the shapes the flames had chiselled.—He at length raised his eyes to a ponderous time-piece.

“The children had better go to bed,” said my aunt, quickly.

We received our usual benediction. I felt tears fall upon my cheek as my aunt embraced me. Not a word was exchanged when we parted on the landing—tears were, to us, such novel guests that we knew not what to make of them.

I went to sleep, and awoke with the same question—What *she* is coming?—It could not be Quinilla—Strange to say, this certainty did not console me. I could have welcomed her with open arms, rather than any one who had power and will, to make my poor aunt weep so bitterly. All my aunt’s kindnesses came forward to claim this conquest of my selfishness—we had never felt that we were

orphans—never had been driven by neglect or censure to bewail a parent's tenderness—we were never taunted with dependence, never told we were intruders—indulgence was not grudgingly doled out with the heart-depressing comment that it was unwise, that we were poor and should be taught privation—care was never awakened for the future, nor even thought. I had no conception that I was a useless animal—a dreamer, unfit for the active employments of life.

Of our immediate history we merely understood that our father had married twice—*unhappily*—that he had imbibed certain principles which led him to coalesce with a party inimical to the actual government; that he had died in prison, and that his property had been confiscated.—To me there was nothing dishonourable attached to the epithet *rebel*.—I knew little of laws or dynasties more modern than those of Sparta and Athens.—My father was a martyr to some act of fearless patriotism; an Aristides banished by an unjust ostracism, a Miltiades expiring in fetters. The political opinions deduced from my peculiar course of

study, associated glory and heroism with state treason, my thoughts seldom reverting to the circumstance, and never uniting with it stigma or disgrace.

I have no clue for resolving why the story of my parentage should this night obtrude itself so vividly, that I could not force my thoughts into a different channel; unless the solution might be discovered in a vague apprehension that the visitor so emphatically apostrophized was in some way connected with us. I felt disquieted at what had never awakened disquiet before. I recalled every sentence of my uncle's statement. I pondered the words—"Your father married twice—*unhappily*—How were these words to be interpreted?—was he unhappy in both marriages, or only because he had married a second time?—We were the children of the first wife; this had been ascertained by a question from Marion, put so directly that it could not be evaded, although the reply was evidently accorded with reluctance. My mother, then, was certainly dead. I felt a satisfaction at this assurance so singular, considering the cause, that I could only

trace it to the same indefinite terror of the coming guest, of claims superseding the rights of those who had fostered us.—There had been nothing to bear out this last conjecture but my poor aunt's unaccustomed emotion, and separation was the only disastrous event I could by any summing up of contingencies fix upon.

We met at breakfast, not with our usual cordial interchanges, but with half questions to which we seemed fearful of reply. Helen seemed as if her night had been as wakeful as mine; my uncle's countenance though calm, was full of thought—my aunt was peevish—I looked around the little parlour, hoping to discover something amiss in the customary arrangement which might justify her querulous remark that nothing went right that morning; but all wore its usual air of comfort. The window was open; straggling shoots of rose-trees and woodbine had forced their way into the room; the breakfast equipage was orderly, and drenched in sunshine; the massy silver tea-pot, gorgeously emblazoned with the crest of the O'Tooles, met and returned the rays; Pug dozed benignant in a warm beam, permitting

puss to share his regal mat without a grumble. The clock hand pointed to the stated minute for pouring out the tea. The butter, eggs, and cream, presented no excuse for fretfulness—My aunt at last discovered one in Marion's absence, though in that there was nothing novel, for Marion's attachment to an early ramble and Grace McQuillan's oat-cake had been too long understood and winked at, to give fair plea for reprehension. Besides, my aunt until this morning had never thought of finding fault with any of us.—Some master key was jarred, and the whole mental instrument sounded sharp and wiry.

Even this last subterfuge for crossness was defeated—Marion now entered, as she mostly did, laughing; and, never dreaming of displeasure, flew to embrace the lips just parted to rebuke her. My aunt's contracted brow relaxed: she looked kindly but sorrowfully at the lovely face peeping through curls which clustered in glossy rings around the forehead or fell beneath a large straw hat almost to the shoulders.—“There,” cried Marion, showering heaths of various hues upon the breakfast table,



‘ I have found out an early bank and gathered every sprig—This purple darling Grace calls *Lady’s dimples*—this crimson *Lady’s tears*—this drooping, tremulous white, is *Helen*—This saucy-looking spikelet she has christened *Marion*—’tis pretty. All these are for my aunt, a parlour nosegay.—And here, she added, unfastening her cloak, in the hood of which another gathering was, lodged, “here is a fine provision for Helen’s weeny weavers!—reeds and bulrushes in plenty—puss shall have a mat—Granny’s hassock wants repair, and Katy wants a basket—these panicles will dye a lovely green (another trade for Helen’s little fry,)—and this, this is the very herb that Grace distils for Walter! Here is uncle’s portion, the poor man’s weather-glass; its eye is open; no rain to day. This London pride I’ve just entitled *Theodore O’Toole, Esquire*—But what ails you all?—Walter how grave you look: any letter from Quinilla?”

The word *letter* caused a momentary flush and pause—“I have filled your cup Marion,” said my aunt.

“But I breakfasted an hour ago at the



sheeling," cried Marion, "and heard the whole gossip of the glen; for Granny spun two lengths of yarn which might begird that famous city Walter read of; I can tell you all the news while you are breakfasting.—Kitty Reily's sweetheart is come back—Grace foretold as much. But Peggy's has deserted her—Grace warned her of that a month ago; the lad was sullen and had no *nature*. Our glen-boys are all home from the fair; Dennis the *blustering* holding his head so high because it isn't broken—for that he may thank Granny; she prophesied a downfall if he came to fisticuffs, and admonished Dennis to shew his own brains by not braining his companions. Well, let me see—I had almost forgotten the strangest news of all—Blind Johnny found a purse of gold, so Granny's gossips told her, but our witch resolved to sift the business. Her conjuring glass informed her the blind man fibbed, or else the gossips, just for the sake of telling something wonderful:—the purse of gold has dwindled into two small pieces—a donation. And who do you think," she added, laughing so heartily as to force a pause, "who do you think

the donor is?—One of the painters who carried off Quinilla! one of these very men taxed by Slauveen with roguery!—I saw the gold with my own eyes: the poor man who bestows his earnings on the blind is certainly no rogue.”

“Have you finished, Rattle?” said Helen.

“Not half—but you have—Come—Granny predicts a broiling day; take my advice; let us go to the baby-house in the cool of morning, and leave the afternoon for reading.—Come, Walter, you look as if your head ached.—How serious you are all!—I rattled only to amuse you.”

“Go, Marion,” said my uncle—your aunt and I have matters to arrange—go children.”

We strolled towards the causeway. Marion tried to rally Helen, and sank herself into a fit of musing. There was no allusion to the letter: we seemed with one consent to avoid the subject, lest the bare mention should materialize our phantasms. Helen suddenly remembered her baby-house would not be tenanted until the afternoon—“Let us return then,” said Marion, “there are still some hours for our *dumb* companions.

We followed her through the empty breakfast room into the study: that also was unoccupied—Helen looked at my uncle's vacant chair and half retreated—We were so accustomed to be welcomed by his nod.

“Every one is in the dumps I think this morning,” said Marion, forcing a laugh;—aunt would call it a *brown study*—come forward thou old chronicler,” she added, drawing forth a volume. “I left my hero, the De Courcy, frightening a Frenchman by mere dint of looking grim. To your seats, to your seats;—we have already wasted more minutes in one day than aunt would in fifty!”

We obeyed, and were soon as silent as old night, oblivious of ourselves, turning over leaves like well arranged automata—Marion was the first to break the silence she had enjoined.

“Shall I read you this choronicle of the great De Courcy Helen?—‘Tis a rare example of chivalrous valor and blunt sincerity.—But how spiritless you look!—some spell is on us all; I’ll tell you what will break it; Grace holds a court to day; our piper Conlan is to be fined for getting drunk and making his poor old

grandmother dance to the tune of Morgan Rattler till she fell into a fit.—'Twas barbarous ! and our Brehon means to put on her black cowl and make him pay for it. The glen's-folk are all thronging to her *moze* to hear the sentence ; let us join them ; will you come Walter ?”

I shook my head.

Marion looked over my shoulder.—“I am jealous of that Homer: we have wonderful bards of our own: read this; 'twill kill you with delight !” She put Ossian over Homer—“And now for a short cut,” she added, “to save intruding on aunt's ducks and chickens,” she flung the casement open, and drawing her sister after her, jumped from the low window ledge, enjoining me to compare the two blind minstrels and render justice as her Granny would.

## CHAPTER VII.

Of Everallin were my thoughts..... She stood on a cloud before my sight, and spoke with feeble voice ! “ Rise, Ossian, rise, and save my son.”

*Fingal.*

I READ at first with thoughts pre-occupied : insensibly the wild measure of the Celtic Bard, the artful blending of the tender and the terrible, entranced me so completely, that voices in the adjoining room were unattended to, until the accent of distress called me from the Hall of Odin.

“ It may be as you say, Fitzgerald—I hope it is—to lose them now would break my heart ; now, when we had made so sure of them.—

The Baron isn't dead I hope ; what brings her then ?—what business has she *philandering* to us all the way from Germany—The children don't want *her*, thank God !”

“ You forget who you are speaking of Laura,” said my uncle.

“ Well I suppose I do Fitzgerald : I am nothing to a Baroness I know, but I cannot forget that it was my love for these dear lambs that made you choose plain Miss O'Toole. Quinilla, you know, was always reckoned the beauty of the family ; but what is even she to Marion and Helen !—Tell me, Fitzgerald, in all your travels did you ever see such faces ?”

Of my uncle's reply I could only distinguish the word, “ mother !”

“ Well, poor thing,” rejoined my aunt, “ *her* beauty was no gain,”—Ah, that was a piteous fate ! but roses die as well as burdocks—what a fool she was to choose that wild Lord Gerald !”

“ I loved him, Laura,” said my uncle.

“ I know you did, Fitzgerald ; I know you did ; you couldn't well hate any one, not if they robbed and murdered you, much less your

brother. But I was only speaking of the children's beauty—Walter, to be sure, is not *very* handsome; not *very*; not quite so good looking as you—all trees are not oaks you know, Fitzgerald—but then he is so taking, so patient, poor sickly thing!—his smile goes to the heart!—How any one could desert the boy is a miracle! But some folk have neither souls nor consciences: fair husks hide often bitter kernels!—And then Helen—was ever mortal lovelier?—She has not, to be sure, the *finish* of Quinilla; no more has Marion—Quinilla has seen the world. But circumstanced as they are, 'tis better they should never see the world?"

"I think as you do Laura," said my uncle; "God grant they never mingle in its selfish tumult!—they are so simple in their wishes, so united!—We have enough to keep them, and to leave them; and when we die, Walter will be his sisters' guardian—Helen and he, I think, will never separate; but Marion—"

"Well, poor child," exclaimed my aunt, "'tis hard she should not marry, for I am happier with you Fitzgerald than I could be with



twenty brothers, if I had them.—Still I pray to God that she may live and die a Geraldine !”

“Amen ! responded my uncle ;—marry !—no—there is an awful interdict—the fiat of the Almighty !”

These words were uttered in a tone so deep and solemn that terror froze my tongue and glued me to my seat. I had listened unconsciously, without the least intention of becoming an eaves-dropper.

“How lucky it is,” resumed my aunt, “that Walter is so backward and so bookish ; had he been a dashing, fighting, hairbrained boy, he might turn out just such another scapegrace as his father, and break your heart a second time. Grace’s nostrums do him good ; he is not half so sickly as he used to be.”

“I have never repined at his infirmity,” said my uncle.

“Repined !” echoed my aunt, “repined because he is puny—I would not change him for a giant, Mr. Fitzgerald, nor the girls for all your goddesses —repined indeed !”

“Such affection, Laura, will find its merited reward.”

"I want no reward Fitzgerald," cried my aunt, half sobbing.—"'Tis to please myself I love them—If my blessings are removed 'twill kill me;—'twill kill you, too, Mr. Fitzgerald, as quiet as you look."

"I have told you, Laura, that the object of this visit may be merely to *see* the children—a very natural desire—the letter avows no other, and the writer is above deception."

"Heaven grant it!" said my aunt.

"Yourself have looked to this visit for years, with wonder at its having been postponed Laura; the peace has made it practicable; Baron Wallenberg is in London with the Austrian Ambassador."

"True," replied my aunt, "it might be nothing worse than just a fly-blow; I think I have a knack for making myself miserable."

"Have you done as I requested?" said my uncle.

"To be sure I have; Slauveen was off at dawn, on Lanty Maw; Katy is scouring and dusting; I shall help her with a light hand now.—'Tis a lucky thing Quinilla isn't here, for where could we have put the Baroness?"

She brings no servant I suppose—You seem in a brown study Mr. Fitzgerald, did you hear me?”

“I was thinking of the children,” said my uncle; “what are we to say to them?”

“True enough; what *are* we to say to them!—the truth might kill them—if one died with fright, the others would die with grief, dear things!”

“They love us, therefore they will ask no questions,” said my uncle;—“say, merely, ‘you know as much as we can tell you without pain.’”

“But will this Baroness be silent do you think, Fitzgerald?”

“We must refer the matter to her judgment,” said my uncle; “I dare not trust my own.”

“I would trust to yours at any rate as soon as hers, Fitzgerald; she shewed no brilliant head-piece when, against an earthly and a heavenly father’s interdict, she suffered Julia Derentsi to marry!—People call the ways of Providence inscrutable: in my mind they are dark only to those who shut their eyes.—We

have finger-posts enough to guide us, but we often break our heads against them."

During the greater part of this dialogue I was in a state of physical stupefaction. I tried to move, to hem, to make any, the slightest signal of proximity; but there I sat, paralysed, my eyes fastened on the self-same line, my ears trebly active. Even when silence was established I remained stooping over the book, torpid—insensibly my ideas became flickering and confused; consciousness faded into that kind of fantastic dreaminess which sometimes suspends the voluntary action of an exhausted mind. The entrance of my sisters and their anxious enquiries dispelled my trance.—I tried to laugh as I described my ghostly wanderings.

"This poem is too high-wrought for the nervous," observed Helen.—"You spent a sleepless night Walter; you slumbered as you read, and Ossian's spectral heroes haunted you."

"You are ill," said Marion, "I am sure you are."

"Only harassed by the death of Fillan,"

said Helen, pressing my forehead,—“or perhaps comparing, as you requested, the sightless bard of Ilion with Scotland’s *double-sighted* bard.”

While my sisters spoke I was trying to persuade myself that the startling dialogue I had overheard existed only in my trance ; but the effort was too painful ; my temples throbbed ; even the low sweet voices I loved so much distracted me. I sauntered to the headland and stretched myself beneath a tree. For the first time I experienced what it is to feel real uneasiness ; the disorder of my mind was aggravated by the superstitious horrors which the wild imagery of the Celtic bard had engendered ; the preternatural annihilated the probable, and reasonable deductions were upset by imaginings the most absurd. The gorgeous mythology of Homer, so far removed from human sympathies, amused without exciting me ; but the mythology of Ossian, so awful yet so familiar, found me in just the mood congenial to its powerful machinery—cloud-forms and moaning winds saluted me with mystic warning.—

And a voice at that moment *did* salute me,

and a face peeping not from the clouds but through the leafy trellis which surrounded me. So immersed was I in phantom-land, that the ghost of Crugal, with 'eyes like two decaying flames' and voice like the 'rushing blast,' could not have startled me more than the distended features of Slauveen, and the familiar sound of "Master Walter, Master Walter why, I've news for you; she's come! she's here! the little jontlewoman."

I started up.

"Stop awhile, stop awhile—don't scamper ding-dong to your own destruction—where's the use o' both of us being burned to cinders?—I'm only fit for Katy's tinder box!—Set your eyes upon her cap an' pinnars once, an'—haith! you're dished—We're blind in love with her, ourself, already!"

I thought the fellow mad; he sat down, twisting up his legs in the strangest fashion, and dashed his hands across his eyes to disperse the drops of glee.

"There she squats," he cried, struggling between utterance and shrieks of laughter; "there she squats, just like this, upon her



hunkers near the hob, her legs turned rowly powly under her, puttin' one in mind of him in Cork, we call the 'Billy-cut-short,' half man and half bowl-dish.—Don't look at her Master Walter, don't look at her; Lanty Maw could hardly stand it !”

“Lanty Maw,” I repeated; “did she come on Lanty Maw?”

“Not a bit of her,” returned Slauveen; “in a carriage an' four wheels ! it rolled right backwards down Knock na Kerran into murderin' glen. The screech she gave was the first hint we got she was alive—she's not so generous of her tongue as Miss O'Toole.—I took her for the livin' *moral* of a little wizen-lookin' wooden image in Ballygobbin chapel !”

“Ballygobbin chapel—was she there?”

“No, no, she come by the ould pass ; we spied her stuck against the carriage window, for a charm as we thought, St. Bridgid an' her head joined on with stickin' plaster. I crossed myself, an' pious Lanty whisked his tail to shew his duty to her Riverence. But the beauty o' the business is the skurry she put poor Katy in—a dumpy, grumpy, stiff-



eyed, sour haggeen ! Husht ! here's the master —mum as a mouse !”

It is well observed that from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a single step ; sometimes (as in the present case) a very short one. Ossian's cloud-formed Everallin, was at once transformed into the type of a little “ wizen looking” wooden image, St. Bridgid sitting on her hunkers, her head joined on with sticking plaster. The disenchantment was indeed ridiculous ; the strange and common-place were jostling to and fro in the thick haze which obscured my recollections.

My uncle's approach was slow and meditative ; he was too much pre-occupied to notice my embarrassment, or the singularity of my following him without enquiry when he announced the visit of a German lady, a friend of his, who wished to see me. My aunt stopped us in the little passage leading to the parlour, beseeching me to brush my hair and let my shoes be dusted, but my uncle had already opened the door, and I abruptly entered, prepared to meet, without much ceremony, the wizened likeness of St. Bridgid. A lady

turned towards us; I heard my uncle name Madame Wallenberg; I heard my aunt apologize for my disordered dress; what the lady said was lost; a swimming in my eyes, prevented my seeing any thing distinctly, but that the figure bending forward to embrace me was like nothing less, than like the wooden image of St. Bridgid.

I cannot tell how my sisters were received, or whether they shrunk back as sheepishly as I did. Their presentation however brought relief; notice was divided; a welcome hum of voices gave me courage to look up. I recovered from the shock sufficiently to direct a second but more reverential glance at Madame Wallenberg.—My sisters were gazing at her too—she was standing near the window and conversing with my uncle.

It was impossible to mistake the order she belonged to; you classed her at once with the high-bred, and the high-principled.—Her rich foreign dress, and the grandeur of her air, in which stateliness was carried as far as it could go without trenching upon haughtiness, were of themselves sufficient to dismay a rustic who.

had been guilty of such indecorous approach and taught to expect a wizened hag.—I could have annihilated the knave who had beguiled me, and the longer I gazed the more my indignation boiled.

The Baroness was not tall indeed ; the tapering heels of her embroidered shoes did not give her even the height of Marion, but height could have bestowed no added dignity. The style of her countenance, the form of her head, her mien, her gestures were commanding; the splendour and fashion of her dress harmonized with her demeanour ; she was enveloped in shawls of costly texture, and her head dress in form not unlike Grace McQuillan's *birred*,\* suited the character of her singular physiognomy. It was a face more expressive than attractive ; it excited reverence rather than affection ; but for the snow white hair, which was arranged with scrupulous precision and filled the space between her cap and temples, I could not have determined she was old, for her clear, dark eyes had a searching bright-

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\* The ancient Irish conical cap— also Teutonic.

ness; her color, though broken, was brilliant, and her skin, if it wanted the smoothness and polish of youth, had not acquired those deep indelible furrows which are the usual companions of snowy tresses. She was much more erect than either of my sisters: if character can be inferred from countenance, you might have decided that her spirit was as inflexible as her form, and that she could neither bend from majesty nor rectitude. Her accent was so foreign, and her emphasis so peculiar, that although she spoke in English I scarcely understood her.

Our criterion for taste in dress and ornament had been Quinilla: she held the scale in which the nice distinctions of vulgar, dashing, stylish and genteel were delicately balanced; but the discrepancy between her attire and Madame Wallenberg's was so striking that I began to doubt my cousin's orthodoxy. These types of elegance were, each from the other, as far removed as is fine gold from tinfoil;—here were no bugles, plumes, and spangles; no yellow flounces tipped with purple scalloping;—the shawls and robe and queenly ruff were

of a fabric which the Bullock mantua maker's patterns never had exhibited—at least on Quinny's fragile form. The dress of Madame Wallenberg was so disposed that it seemed to me as if it grew upon the wearer; she symbolized the mother of the Gods, the *magna Mater*, a woman I could not for my life have ventured to dissent from, and whom I thought it quite impossible I should again venture to approach. Even while I made my furtive observations I was longing to slink off.

At her feet lay a rich travelling cloak, fit mantle for a Persian satrap, yet she tossed it aside, and trod on it as carelessly as I would tread on Dame McQuillan's rushes.--I thought upon the wrath of Miss O'Toole, and the memorable box she one day gave Slauveen for trampling on her tiffany capote.

At length our visitor, attracted by my uncle's observation of the scenery, turned to the window, and gave me the occasion I had panted for. I slid from chair to chair, and found myself outside the door, rejoicing. My first direction was the kitchen, and Slauveen was my mark—"How dare you," I began—

My rebuke, almost my breathing, was suspended, for, squatted on her hunkers near the hob, her legs turned rowly powly under her, with features rigid as the Ballygobbin image or any other graven type of womankind, was perched the living personation of Slauveen's alluring sketch, *Frau Berga*, or, as the glenboys learned to call her, the *Frowleen*, heirloom of the princely Wallenbergs, head 'tire-woman of the Baroness. The sketch was graphic, even to the cap and pinners; the coif clung around the little antiquated face like the skull-piece of a warrior, while the pendent lappets rested on an enormous ruff gracefully diverging from the *Fräulein's* bosom to her chin; short silvery hair lay close and sleek upon her *matriarchal* forehead; her hands and arms (protected by furred mittens and a satin muff,) were crossed below her stomacher; the keenest scrutiny could not detect a spot upon her mouse-colored satin robe; the clothes, indeed, seemed part and parcel of the body, hewn out of the same block. But for the blinking of the eye-lids you could not have believed she was alive; even this motion was



so exact and uniform, it might fairly have been attributed to the pulling of a wire ; there was no other symptom of the material being animated ; no cough, no hem, no wavy undulation ; the circumambient ruff by which pulsation might have been detected seemed unacted on ; she looked like an image dislodged from a glass case.

The bustling spirit which animated Mrs. Mulligan was this day particularly restless, as if to heighten the effect of her strange visitor's inertia ; scouring and dusting were carried on with might and main ; half the kitchen was submerged, amphibious Katy floating in the dabblement, and never relaxing but to give her guest a stare, which would have frightened any animal but a German *Frau*. Not even when the uncivil suds threatened to pollute her petticoat did Berga swerve a tittle, neither did she wince at sight of the revolving brush ; her hands remained stuck within her muff, her little bead-like eyes still fastened on a plate-rack, which stood against the wall directly opposite, her lips as if they were not made to separate. I was so astonished at the change-

less aspect, that maugre the dangerous wheelings of the scrub, I stood gazing at this mute excellence, this O'Toole antithesis.

Katy's growling comments on my paragon, accompanying the music of her noisy symbol disconcerted me.—“Old Growdy—Hoddy-doddy—neither good nor gracious—dry and rusty, like last year's bacon!”—I grew nervous; it was possible the little *Frau* might hear, although she seemed to lack the other senses.—Slauveen too, drove the blood into my face; the kitchen casement was ajar; it looked into a bawn, which tenanted the pig, the cow, and Lanty Maw; our *Esquire* with a truss of hay was polishing his courser's hide, now looking wistfully at Lanty's back, now at the back of the little gentlewoman, and loudly publishing his quirks and commentaries—“Some are born, Lanty dear, with nothin' to bite, and some to bite the bridle—some are born to blow glass, and some to blow their brains out—I'm bound to comb you Lanty Maw, Pat Shine is bound to a comb-maker—and so we're all sent here for something

Lanty ; but what's Madame Dumb-be-dead-alive sent hither for, we want to know ?—*Hirrups* Lanty ! stand still *eroo* !—Did you ever see a scare-crow Lanty ?—did you ever notice an ould brass Dutch girl that holds two lanky sixes in Madame Bullock's shop ?”

To shut out these polite appeals to Lanty I shut the casement, and was preparing to obey Katy's energetic—“ Good luck to you, an' get out of our way Master Walter ; we have more quality folk already than we care to be acquainted with,” when my aunt's pliant voice summoned Berga Schmidt to wait on Madame Wallenberg.

Roused, as I concluded, by the sound of her own name coupled with the Wallenberg, the little gentlewoman unrolled her legs and stood upon them, without assuming the least encrease of height in consequence ; the feet began, soldier-like, to move, but not the eyes, whose direction she pursued as if forced by her conformation to keep the line of march. Slauveen, observant, threw the window open, and we all

stood gaping at her progress to the plate-rack.

“Left, right, left, right,” exclaimed Slauveen, “quick march—a smart recruit—are plate-racks doors in foreign land I wonder?—Will you watch her then?—she’ll break her head against the dishes!—Misthiss!” he roared as if to force a voice to her understanding—“who drilled you last?—right about face I say! don’t you see the door *behind* you?”

The little gentlewoman paused at the plate-rack, looked as if she took it for a dromedary, and seemed determined to stand still, rather than diverge a foot.—“’Tis a tussle between um,” cried Slauveen, “who’ll move first—I’ll back the plate-rack; will you back the little Corporal, Master Walter?”

Berga’s lips began to more; they emitted the word *Thür*,\* as difficult to me as to Slauveen and Mrs. Mulligan. I was hastening to her relief, having at last divined that she had mistaken the position of the door, (passed in her transit to the magnetic plate-rack,) but my

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\* Door.

gallantry was defeated by the entrance of Helen. She accosted the little foreigner with that truly Irish smile translateable by every one into "a hundred thousand welcomes," and taking the promptly extended hand of our noiseless acquaintance led her from the kitchen.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ To live in friendship is to have the same desires and the same antipathies.”

It may be inferred from the foregoing chapter that the peace, at least the social happiness of our *dulce domum*, was in more danger of being impinged by the new arrivals, than by the return of my cousin. True, Madame Wallenberg's embrace had been affectionate, nay maternal; but Quinilla had informed us that foreigners always salute with a kiss, and that Theodore O'Toole, Esquire, was one day nearly hugged to death in Piccadilly by two outlandish Counts, who took him for their friend Prince Husky Fusky.



I lingered in my chamber, dreading the dinner summons, arranging my apparel, forcing my intractable locks to assume the happy negligence of Sanford's, wishing for his careless step, his look of confidence.—At last the summons came; I shook from head to foot, made a desperate move, and found myself behind Helen, unconsciously responding to my uncle's grace. I was wedging myself between my sisters, and wondering which of us would venture to speak first.—

“Walter sit near me,—will you?”

I did not believe my ears, and stared at Madame Wallenberg.—The smile and beckon were conclusive; they were even more familiar than the address; I might have said more affectionate. In a minute I was seated near her, and fascinated into sociability;—from that hour I lost my terror of the Baroness.

Marion had been previously encouraged into freedom; her vivacious humour was in full career; even before dinner was removed the trial scene at Carrig-a-Phooka, was sketched. Grace with her holly wand and her portentous

head-gear, exalted on the mystic Liafail,\* surrounded by her motley auditors ; the entrance of the prisoner ; the arraignment ; the indignation of the court upon Grace's statement of the outrage ; the effect which the sudden display of the palsied grandmother (managed by the drawing of a curtain) had on the delinquent ; his contrition ; the Eric† he was adjudged to pay ; videlicet, the earnings of his pipes at Kitty Reily's wedding for the use of the Shan-van-vogh,‡ and the promise, (bitterest test of all,) which he was compelled to make, never again to let our glen-boys '*welt the flure*' to the merry notes of *Morgan Rattler*.—"Conlan" added Marion, "bore all our Brehon's judgments very patiently but this banishment of Morgan Rattler ; he would rather part, he said, with '*Drops o' Brandy* !' 'twas like his brother, Morgan Rattler was, the darling tune that he grew up with. Our Gran-ny thinks of softening this part of the sentence.

Marion's countenance as she described this scene is now before me—mirth, archness, drol-

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\* Liafail, stone of fate. † A Fine. ‡ Poor old woman.

lery playing off her dimples. She never looked more unspeakably happy, more attractive, yet Madame Wallenberg's eyes were fixed on her with a serious, mournful, and, in as far as my side glance could determine, a pitying gaze.—Did others notice this unseasonable gravity?—I looked around; Helen was laughing at Marion's apt imitation of the piper Conlan; my aunt seemed in the clouds; my uncle was the only one besides myself who observed the singular expression of the Baroness. Marion, entirely regardless, had harnessed fancy's chariot, and was off to fairy-land, describing to our august visitor the attributes of each distinctive aeriform genus, the feats and pranks of of Red-caps, Green-caps, Pookas, Shefros.

Helen did not appear so much at ease; she, like me, had inferred from my aunt's disturbance, and the unguarded exclamation drawn forth by the letter, that this foreigner came to take us from the glen, or else to herald some such terrible event; she spoke little, looked at our visitor doubtingly, and bent her whole attention to assist our dear good aunt, as if she feared the influence of the regal looking

stranger, and was determined that no one should usurp the rights our first friends had to our regard. But not even these unqualified attentions could brighten up the hostess; she seemed entangled in some undivulgeable difficulty which kept back her usually prompt solicitude to recommend another slice of that 'lovely leg of pork,' or to insist upon your eating the side-bone of that 'beautiful young goose.'

My uncle treated his visitor with cordial respect, preserving an ease of manner which shewed him perfectly acquainted with the usages of that society to which the Baroness belonged. They were evidently old friends; they spoke of courts and circles in the which we had hitherto been ignorant my uncle had ever mixed. It was evident that Madame Wallenberg had not calculated on the isolated location of our *terra incognita*, and was also unaware of our limited establishment, small house, and simple style of living. She would every now and then deliver some perplexing order to Slauveen, or ask for some implement of which we had never heard the name; then laugh at

her own clumsiness, beg pardon with the most graceful good humour, and relate some pleasant anecdote of similiar mistakes ; shewing herself imbued with that rare politeness which makes your hearers satisfied with you and with themselves. Helen's face began to dress itself in smiles ; the painful redness which had spread even to my good aunt's ears gradually paled, and but for the grand dilemma which kept her blood in fever heat, she would have found herself, as she afterwards protested, as much at home with the high-bred Baroness as ever she had been with Mrs. Bullock. But this strait seemed unnavigable ; the more she pondered, the more she fidgetted. At last, without the least apology, she left the room ; I followed with my sisters, none of us dreaming that our conduct was uncourteous.

And now the mischief came to light—what was to be done with little Berga ?—There was *no ho* with Katy, my aunt said, ever since the unlooked for coming of the German waiting-maid ; it was all Fitzgerald's fault ; he might as well have mentioned in the note he sent off by Slauveen the straits they had been put to, to

accommodate the mistress; the Baroness's great fur cloak and carriage boxes filled up every spare inch of Quinny's room; there was no space left for stowage of a spider!—But for *her* a footman, too, had thrust himself into the cottage, a great strapping fellow with a fierce cocked-hat that stuck between the door posts.—“I sent him off with the carriage,” pursued my aunt;—“Fitzgerald has a curious notion of convenience to cram a coach-load into a cat's cradle; but what can be expected from a man who thinks his purse-strings pull as widely as his heart-strings? always in the moon with that Plato and his squad!”

I had no device to meet this untoward contingency—Marion suggested an appeal to Katy's generosity—*could* she refuse to share her bed with a poor stranger?

“Katy!” exclaimed my aunt,—“are you in earnest Marion!—Katy sleep with such a little show!—why she will hardly eat with her!—a thing, she says, that moves like an enchanted poker and can't say ‘*Slaun the huth*’\* in plain

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\* *Slaun the huth*—thank you.



English!—Slauveen vows the German is not flesh—she sat this scorching day, without being scorched, two inches only from a fire that would roast our cow. They have made up their minds that she is enchanted: I think, myself, she was alive at the great frost.”

Helen observed that she might not have been accustomed to so cold an atmosphere, and quoted the Baroness’s shawls and furs.

“Well,” said my aunt, “that’s another pretty piece of business!—She can have no fire in her room, because there is no grate to put it in. But this Berga is the plague of plagues! we have no room at all for her, and if we had the room we have no bed.”

“But Grace has both,” said Helen—  
“Berga shall have the stranger’s bed at Carriga-Phooka; our Granny’s heart will warm to this inoffensive little creature.”

“But do you think, Helen, this Baroness was ever dressed and undressed without a pair of hands besides her own? Katy has no time to wait upon her.”

“But I have,” replied Helen; “you know I often dress Quinilla. Marion, *you* shall

announce a visitor to Granny; *I* will arrange the matter with the Baroness."

Marion was off like lightning, but my aunt demurred. Katy, to be sure, knew no more of German than did Grace McQuillan: indeed no one in the kitchen could make out what the stupid little animal meant, which was one reason they complained of her so bitterly; they were worn out with bawling to her, and got nothing for their pains but a bewildered blare. Still the poor woman might be taken ill; she might die up at the sheeling; at the cottage there was always a resource in Madame Wallenberg.

While my aunt thus veered from *pro* to *con*, with me alone for auditor, Helen had frankly related to our guest the dire predicament, had submitted her own arrangement, and even before we entered, had established herself *dame d'atour* to Madame Wallenberg. The Baroness, indeed, seemed infinitely to enjoy the blunder she had made in bringing so much incompressible material, so many of substantial mould to fairy land; and made so merry at her own expense that she forced my aunt into

a hearty laugh, and in a short time we grew into such intimacy, that on adjourning to the study we fell into our usual pursuits and places. Helen drew forth the ponderous work-basket, arranged aunt's creaking table, and every thing seemed tending to the point of comfort, for Madame Wallenberg, observing the cheery turf pile, (which Slauveen, with a leer at me, insinuated was longing to be kindled,) pleaded her chilly habits and proposed a fire. Thus did our visitor at once install herself a member of our little household, appearing as a well-beloved long absent friend returned from a distant country. She spoke indeed of Kings and Emperors with as much indifference as we would speak of Jock Mc Quillan, but arrogating nothing from the casualty which had placed her in such a glittering orbit. There was no revolting air of condescension, no would-be-gracious nod; none of that offensive affability I have since seen practised by the *little* great ones. She chatted with my aunt as friend with friend, enquired into our mode of life and our pursuits, bespoke a visit to the dairy and the byre, longed to

see the baby-house, looked into our books, rallied my uncle on his passion for the ancients, to which rare constancy she owed, she said, his passion for herself; then told a tale of his devotion at eighteen to some sexagenarian beauty of the Austrian court, which made us weep with laughter. Whenever her meaning was obscure, my aunt would bluntly question her, for the Baroness spoke English with the German idiom, and though her compound words were beautiful, they were perplexing.

Of herself, her home and country, she conversed with frankness; of her castle on the Elbe and her palace at Vienna. There seemed no concealment; all was candid and unstudied, yet I could not help revolving the singularity of such a woman making such a journey to visit simple cottagers. Her son, we learned, was married to a German Princess. She was graciously satisfying my aunt's queries about her forest grounds and feudal castle, when Marion entered, unceremoniously presenting Grace McQuillan.

Grace's admiration of the *rare ould gentry* was inherent; her dip to Madame Wallenberg

was reverential. The lower Irish have a peculiar tact for welding the *free and easy* with profound respect, amalgamating as expertly the current ore of compliment with the more sterling coin of genuine good-will. Our Granny, quite decorously, but nothing daunted, advanced within a step or two of Madame Wallenberg, then came to a full stop with "save your honor kindly, and a lucky journey to your baronship," dropped a second lowly dip, and, while the parting sun-beam lighted up her yellow *birred*, discreetly prefaced her hospitable errand.—The trouble was neither here nor there; she should be proud of such good company; Miss Marion had informed her what a decent, tidy, sober, little body the honorable lady's waiting-lady was; at first they might be something strange with one another, by reason that their tongues were strange, but she had learned a way of talking without words, and was very quick, besides, in reading people's looks. She had come herself, as it behoved her, to fetch good Mrs. Berga, to help her through the pass, and promise her a hearty welcome. Without waiting

for a reply which might have included undesired acknowledgments, Grace turned her back upon the Baroness; but her exit was cut off; for Berga entered, ushered by Helen.

The German and the Irishwoman stood awhile in mutual admiration, each making the other a curtesy profound. There were certain points of resemblance between these embryo friends which predicted union, traits of the *path-keeping* character, (softened in Grace McQuillan by benevolence,) with the more discernible analogies of punctilious neatness and propriety. The Baroness explained to her stoical attendant the reason which compelled their separation for the present. The *Fräulein* looked pathetically at her mistress, hesitated, and glanced into the background, where lurked Katy, anxious to learn the wind-up, and flourishing the petrific broom. Berga seemed leisurely to contrast the smoke-dried countenance, straggling hair, soiled cap, and unpropitious scowl of Mrs. Mulligan, with Grace McQuillan's clean, healthful aspect and inviting smile. The comparison decided her; she approached the Queen of Carrig-a-Phooka



with stately port and gait deliberative, took the offered arm, and leaned upon it with an air of quiet confidence. Grace gave the little hand a friendly squeeze, and, turning to my aunt, begged the loan of Lanty Maw, observing—belike the weeny body had already walked her day's allowance.

We crowded around the window to witness the set out. Berga, hooded carefully and swathed in furs, clasping her new friend, whom she looked up to with infantine reliance, was pillioned behind Grace, who held the bridle with a practised hand, haranguing Lanty Maw in Irish, profuse of coaxing epithets, and praising his angelic temper. Lanty demurely listened, and shewed the magical effect of flattery, by placidly submitting to the double load. The glen-boys highest in our Granny's estimation were honored with Madam Berga's multiform boxes; one ragged posse, assuming the office of pioneer, was already in advance to clear away obstructions; another, in the rear, was armed with switch and cudgel to quicken Lanty's motion. Katy and Slauveen, grown *wonderful polite*, tucked in the *Fräulein's* petti-

coats exhorting the escort to leave off their obstreporous shouts, and not scare the *sinses* of the little Palatine.\*

"Mind boys," cried Mrs. Mulligan, "she's not our countryman; she knows nothin' of our manners."

Arrangements being now completed, the cavalcade sat off, our gallo-glasses, as they were wont, making the welkin ring with "hurroo for the Geraldine!"

This little interlude cleared away the trifling remnant of reserve which hung between us and our guest, who begged to be thoroughly initiated into our aboriginal cheers and compliments, and made Marion promise to conduct her to the eyrie of our fairy Queen.

The evening I had looked forward to with such foreboding, passed away as rapidly as when Helen would cheat time of half its hours. Had Madame Wallenberg departed the next day, I should have inferred that her stateliness was merely a physical feature of the German

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\* The German settlers were called by the Munster boys, Palatines.

type with which the mind had no alliance. This opinion for many weeks prevailed; there was no apparent effort in the readiness with which she passed from the splendour of courtly life to the simple tenor of a rude, unsophisticated existence; there was no ostentatious hint that she felt perfectly at home; no look of ill-disguised discontent, no contemptuous sneer detected through a flimsy covering; nothing to remind her humble hostess of the colossal eminence which raised Madame Wallenberg above blunt, unlettered Dame Fitzgerald. Had the barbarous modes described by Tacitus still obtained in Germany, Madame Wallenberg could not have shewn less astonishment at our uncultured manners, or less distaste for our homely dwelling and our simple aliment. Hers was that pure good taste which loves to elevate the humble-minded. To this generous feeling I attributed her attentions to myself; she was partial to us all, but I was particularly noticed, for she saw me suffering under a painful sense of inferiority, lame, feeble, awkward, and utterly unconscious of my most besetting evil—indolence. Had it not

been for this last despotic malady, I might have profited equally with Helen by our new friend's conversation, but this indolence, co-operating with prejudiced opinions of the value of my early course of reading, kept me from the track of useful knowledge. Marion was almost as averse as I was, to change the nature of her themes; she would watch her opportunity, and break upon the more solid trains of enquiry, pursued by Helen, with some arch comment which would betray us to the world of spirits. It was impossible to resist her caressing tone; the fairy host of Germany was summoned from its rocks and caves and woodland haunts to please her; Elves of the Brockenberg were called forth to test their necromantic feats with Irish elves—our Cluricaune attacked the Saxon Kobold, and beat it out and out; the phantomhunter on his spectre-steed was distanced in an eye-wink by Padreen Carty on the Pooka; while Number-nip and all his imps fled at the touch of our Fir-Darrig.

After our first evening's introductional conversation I noticed that Madame Wallenberg

seldom gave us glimpses of the high and palmy state she moved in—never but when directly questioned. Even her instructions tended to strengthen our attachment to humble life; there was no effort made to divert us from the path of social happiness hitherto pursued, or to impart those accomplishments which we knew Madame Wallenberg possessed, and which might have been thought necessary to my sisters had they been destined for a higher sphere. Helen owed her attainment of the German language more to her own love of study than to the incitement of our visitor. The Baroness, indeed, assisted her progress, but when she conversed with my sister in her native tongue, it appeared rather for her own relaxation than for Helen's improvement.

Thus were our fears of removal completely set at rest; my aunt now looked upon her guest with that substantial good-will which evidences welcome without a single draw-back. Even Katy's and Slauveen's disgust began to slacken; they regarded the interlopers with something bordering on civility; nay Mrs. Mulligan was heard to remark that the Baron-

ess put her in mind of a sweet young Countess Cassandra Von-Bubber she lived with once—a sort of Dutch-Irish-woman, who would stretch out her portly fist to any beggar, by *raison* she never doubted the blood that flowed in it.—“None of your upstart *musheroons* wrung out of industry,” pursued Katy, “who turn up their noses at dunghills because their *stock* was *gathered* there!”

Quinilla had often assured us that we should be *non-entities* in tip-top company; downright ignoramuses. She would give us gratuitous lectures on etiquette, which were more difficult to comprehend than the Ogum characters engraven on the Liafail of Carrig-a-Phooka; I used to ponder on this occult jargon until the thinking principle would begin to fail.

But in the style of Madame Wallenberg there was no ambiguity, no break-neck spring at the sublime; her words were as freely chosen as our own, as simple, and as intelligible to the simple; nay her compounds soon became familiar—Yet she was certainly *tip-top*; therefore we concluded, that to be unsusceptible of Quinilla’s far-fetches might not prove us so



utterly vulgarian as our cousin represented us. In our discussion on this matter Marion observed there might be two tip-tops, the one impenetrable, the other penetrable; and thus we finally arranged it, with one accord preferring the plain-spoken fashionist to the incomprehensible.

## CHAPTER IX.

Nor spring nor summer's beauty hath such grace  
As I have seen in one autumnal face.

*Donne.*

THE memoir of a happy life is seldom interesting ; even our happy days, however we ourselves may love to prate of them, are, in description, vapid ; the listener yawns and longs for some enlivening mischief, some dark vicissitude, to harrow up the soul or fill it with delicious anguish. This craving for the excitable in narrative is predominant in myself ; when in Helen's melo-

dramas the course of true love would 'run smooth,' Marion and I were listless auditors; when her model was so perfect that not even a heel was vulnerable, when her creations were like beings far above the moon, unsusceptible of the coarser feelings and incapable of mortal error, so were they also, by their faultless essence, shut out from mortal sympathies. To these angelic natures we preferred the *human* nature which kept us in a fever; and, to the optimism which shadowed forth infallibility, we preferred the interesting ups and downs, and blots and brightnesses of erring fleshly creatures.—Were I to depict the brilliant features only, of those characters with which my destiny allied me, and to dole out a prosy repetition of every day occurrences, trite echoes of each other, my story might fare no better than did my countryman O'Rourke when he soared into the lunar region: therefore I pass over the summer days succeeding Madame Wallenberg's arrival, and enter on the autumn, precursor of fog, and tempest, tooth-ache and Quinilla.—As yet there was no herald more direct of her approach.

It had been hinted by my aunt to Madame Wallenberg, that there was such a person as Miss O'Toole, a partner in our household, and expected to resume her place before the winter ; but the Baroness had the oddest habit of forgetting what she considered *nothings*, though heaven knows the forewarned reunion was a deprecated *something* to one of us at least ; I secretly rejoiced at our guest's oblivious habit, hoping that our cousin might be driven into favoring Mrs. Bullock with a super-added month.

But my poor aunt's ear-tips again grew scarlet at what she called 'the second part of the same tune,' for where was Quinny to be lodged ?—Courtesy to her respected visitor forbade a repetition of the hint ; my uncle could as soon cease to be, as be inhospitable ; and we, the younger aids she had recourse to, were so doleful at the prospect of exchanging the Baroness for the O'Toole, that the subject was put off from day to day, and at last deferred until a letter from Quinilla should make some arrangement peremptory.—What a panic seized us whenever Slauveen or Katy broke on us

abruptly ! the very mention of a letter drove the blood into my head !

At length the Baroness herself began to speak of separation, although indefinitely. Grief made us silent ; my uncle hemmed, and began laboriously to stroke Quinilla's pug ; my aunt made the strangest cackle, between a laugh and whimper ; she confessed to us, in private, that had it not been for poor, forgotten Quinny she should have cried in earnest—"But children," added she, "you may perceive with half an eye, that two fine ladies could never hit off in such close quarters as this cottage. Madame Wallenberg and our Quinilla have different notions of gentility—there is something more of *dash* about Quinilla."

Whether her intimation of departure had been accidental, or that, perceiving our dejection, she had determined on a longer stay in Ireland, our visitor's intention seemed abandoned, and, but for her long conferences with my uncle, which we feared preluded a leave-taking, we might have thought it given up. My aunt, meanwhile, again hung upon the hooks of dire uncertainty, wondering equally

at Madame Wallenberg's and at Quinilla's silence; sometimes surmising that Mrs. Bullock might wish to shew off her sister at the winter *drums*, sometimes that Baron Wallenberg might not be quite so fond of *his* wife's company as *her* Fitzgerald was.

One morning that my uncle and the Baroness had quitted the breakfast-room before us, my aunt energetically set forth her reasons for this latter surmise.—“ I never left Fitzgerald since I married him but once, and that was *willy nilly*, it seemed a hundred thousand years till I got back to him again!—But people in high life are taught to keep their hearts like clocks, always ticking the same measure.—Ah children! these great ones never feel the transport of a glad shake hand! a throbbing welcome!”

“ I would not live with them to be their Queen,” said Marion, “ although I dote on Madame Wallenberg—to be condemned to carry such loads of useless things—ruffs, trains, ruffles, stomachers, et ceteras, interminable!—Quinilla must suffer twice as much as the Baroness, for she wears twice the quantity.”



“Well,” said my aunt, “a young woman has more excuses than an old one, Marion: the Baroness is old enough to be Quinilla’s mother, and yet her stomacher-pin would purchase all the clothes poor Quinny ever put upon her back. Certainly the Baroness can count my sister’s farthings with pounds sterling, and may likewise lay some stress upon her rank, though as to ancient blood not all the Barons ever born could go beyond the first O’Toole.”

“Does ancient blood give elegance of manner, aunt?” said Marion.

“Not quite a finish,” said my aunt; “one must see the world, like Quinilla, to be up to style.”

“And yet,” said Marion, “our cousin is as unlike the Baroness as Katy is—still Madame Wallenberg has seen much more of the world than Quinilla has.”

“You should remember Marion,” said my aunt, “that German and Irish manners may differ very widely. I have often heard my father say, (and he was versed in heraldry and ancient history,) that those German tribes

were Goths or Vandals, I don't remember which, but they were savages of some sort and *very* modern; the Irish, on the contrary, came from the plains of Shinar, a place as ancient as the Tower of Babel, and were polished by Jews and Gentiles, Spaniards and Egyptians, as they came along. My father learned all this from books with names as hard as bullets, some of them written by a woman, too, one *Polly-Chronicon*."

Marion, to whom the chronicles of Ireland were as familiar as her name, looked at me with eyes significant of laughter.—Helen changed the conversation by asking whether Madame Wallenberg had other children than the son she spoke of.—The silence which succeeded this enquiry made me look towards my aunt; she was staring at Helen as intensely as if she had been called on to expound the Sphinx's riddle. At first I thought that she was ideally immersed in culinary arrangement, speculating upon the tenderness of an unconscious turkey about to be surrendered to the relentless gripe of Mrs. Mulligan, or settling whether the *bonnaveens* that very morning

introduced into the world should figure on the board as *debutanti* or old stagers, as roasted pig or bacon. Marion took up Helen's question.

"Is that Baron Wallenberg, who married the Princess, an only child, I wonder?"

"Wallenberg!" echoed my aunt; "there is no Baron Wallenberg but the old Baron—the son is Baron Derentsi."

"The German nobles then have various titles in one family, like the Irish nobles," observed Marion; "the Geraldines in olden time were Kildares, Desmonds, Ophalys, and so forth; but aunt, has Madame Wallenberg—"

"And there was the Deacon of St. David's, Gerald Barry," said my aunt; "a Welchman by his mother, a tutor to King John, and a great liar, people tell me, though he was a priest."

"But is this Baron Derentsi an only—"

"And there was Shamus Desmond, the *sougawn* Earl," said my aunt; "he died in London tower as high as if he had been hanged. His lady, (the enchanted Countess,)

cut her teeth three times, and had two heads of hair ; she was a Geraldine herself upon the father's side, one Maurice of Clangibbon, a white Knight—”

“ But is this Baron—”

“ And there was silken Thomas,” went on my aunt, whose brain all of a sudden seemed pregnant with historic fragments and eager for delivery ;—“ he was a rank rebel, and murdered an archbishop.”

The more my aunt evaded, the more did Marion's curiosity incite her to persevere—  
“ But is this Baron Derentsi an only child ?”

“ Neither was Derentsi a title of the Wallenbergs,” said my provoking aunt ; “ the Baroness's brother was Baron Derentsi ; her eldest son upon the uncle's death came in for title and estate.”

“ The uncle had no children then,” said Helen.

“ He had no son,” was the reply.

“ Had he daughters aunt ?” enquired Marion.

“ He had *one* ; Katy is waiting for directions ; I must go.”

“Katy is busy with her little porkers,” exclaimed Marion, looking from the window; “I wonder Baron Derentsi did not leave his fortune to his daughter.”

“She!—she was destined to a convent Marion.”

“Poor thing!—I don’t like convents; Grace says that they are prisons with another name; my heart shivers when I think of being shut out from this beautiful world; I would rather be a bird, or even a branch of heath!—And so this poor—what was her name, aunt?”

“Her name?—Julia Derentsi.”

I started.

“And so they shut her in a convent, aunt?”

“They *should* have done so child, but the Baroness against her brother’s dying wish and will, adopted Julia and brought her up at Wallenberg.”

“Then they did *not* make a nun of her—How glad I am! May be she was married to her cousin.”

“Baron Derentsi married the Princess Ehrenstein.”

“ But you said he was an elder son,” observed Helen ; therefore, aunt, we must infer there was another.”

“ There *was* another, Helen, Count Ernest.”

“ *Was,*” repeated Marion,—“ is he dead ? did he die of love ?—did he die lately ?—the Baroness does not seem to mourn any one.”

“ ’Tis many a day since he was killed poor man,” sighed forth my aunt.

“ Killed ! he was a soldier then : make haste and tell it all aunt, there’s a darling—Helen will make this German story into a nice romance .”

“ A nice romance !” exclaimed my aunt ;  
“ a nice romance !—God help you child !”

Marion was too much excited to remark the melancholy tone in which these words were uttered. I was on the rack.

“ And so the second son was killed in battle,” said Marion coaxingly ; “ you’ll tell me won’t you aunt ? ”

“ In battle !—no—but in a duel.”

“ And now I guess it all,” said Marion ; “ Don’t say another word.—The young man loved his cousin Julia, who was very beautiful, as is every

heroine ; some more favored cavalier stepped in, stole Julia's heart, and ran away with her."

The blank look of puzzlement and wonderment which my aunt fixed upon the speaker upset our gravity. We laughed.—"God help you children !" she exclaimed at length, "God help you !" —She rose to leave the room.

Stop aunt, one moment ; you have not heard my sequel yet," said Marion ; "this cavalier who ran away with Julia, was challenged by Count Ernest, and—oh ! how I pity the poor Baroness !—her son was killed !"

There was an instantaneous change in Marion's tone and countenance ; she seemed suddenly to have recollected our visitor's connexion with the sorrowful catastrophe whose cause she had so lightly surmised ; and looking at my aunt with a penitent expression, mingled with a lurking curiosity, she asked whether she had, indeed, read aright the whole of the romance. My aunt's emphatic "no" was bluntly spoken ; it said quite plainly—"your questions are importunate ;"—still Marion would not be discouraged—"But the young Count must have been killed by somebody you know aunt."



“ I know ! who told you that I knew him ? ”

“ Nay, now you have confessed what I never intended to imply,” said Marion: “ come aunt, you wo’n’t refuse us will you ?—Just look at Walter ; how his eyes are fixed on you ! Tell us something of the Knight who slew the Baron’s son and married Julia Derentsi, won’t you aunt ?—was he handsome ?—did he make her a good husband ? ”

“ A good husband !—he ! ”

“ Yes, as good a husband as our uncle makes his own dear wife.”

“ As good a husband as *my* Fitzgerald ! ” cried my aunt indignantly—“ A man who took another wife before poor Julia went to heaven ? ”

“ Another wife ! ” said Marion ; “ what a wretch ! ”

“ Not half so bad though as the woman was that married him—’tis a way the women have in Germany.—There’s not a husband in ten thousand to be named with *my* Fitzgerald, Marion.”

“ But I never thought that any man, now a days, was suffered to take more wives than one,” said Marion.

“The Turks have shoals,” replied my aunt ; “don’t you remember the story Helen told us of the Turk who burned his wives for fear a christian spark should catch them ?—This case, however, was not quite so bad, not polygamy entirely—the second wife was lawful I believe, for the Pope, or some one, had granted a divorce.”

“How very wicked of the Pope,” said Marion.

“But aunt you have named all the actors of this story except Julia’s husband ; was he a German Baron too ?” said Helen.

“What a fool I am to waste my morning in this manner !” said my aunt, abruptly rising—“No orders yet for dinner !—To think of my prating a whole hour of what concerns none of *us* at any rate.”

She stammered and reddened at the last words as if her conscientiousness were wounded : with her hand upon the door-handle she turned round and begged we would never say another word upon the subject—“’Tis nothing to us you know,” she added, coloring still deeper, “whether the man was Turk or christian ; but Fitzgerald would be wild if he thought

I told you any thing which you might blab before the Baroness—a hint of the affair would be her death, may be, as easy as she looks. Above all, children, for mercy's sake, never drop a word of Margaret Wallenberg.

“Margaret Wallenberg,” we all exclaimed, “who is Margaret Wallenberg?”

“The Baroness' daughter to be sure—how stupid you must be!—Didn't I tell you she was the second wife of—of—of that unlucky scape-goat, or did I tell you?—my head is so distracted I don't know what I'm saying—the second wife of that wild—German Baron—did you say German, Helen?—to be sure—German root and branch.—Let me go Marion; the longer I live the more I see the mischief talking makes.”

She left the room, but returned to conjure us to be prudent.—“The Baroness, children, is not so comfortable as she pretends;—mention her daughter and there's an end of her philosophy.”

“How horrid!” exclaimed Marion, when my aunt had closed the door; “'tis ten times worse than I expected. This unknown knight

of a certainty married the two cousins—so much is clear at all events—and broke their hearts, may be ! I wish I had not teased poor aunt ; she looked quite flurried.—You think as I do, don't you, Helen ?”

“ That my aunt looked flurried ?”

“ No, no ; that this nameless Cavalier was as reckless of his ladies' lives as that hot Saracen who blew up all his wives to baffle the Crusaders. The legend struck my aunt you see.—What are you thinking of, Helen ?”

“ Of Madame Wallenberg ;—how nobly she bears up against such trials !”

“ My aunt says these events took place years ago,” cried Marion.

“ Time might have softened her sorrow for her son and niece, but the remembrance of her daughter's error, Marion !”

“ Perhaps the error was repented of.”

“ I might have given it a more serious name,” said Helen.

“ But may there not be something to extenuate ?” asked Marion.

“ Could *you* marry the murderer of Walter,

and the husband of another, Marion; that other your nursery companion?"

"The murderer of Walter!" exclaimed Marion, looking at me with eyes brimful of terror—"the murderer of Walter!—I would sooner die!—You place this Margaret's error in a stronger light;—true! these wives were cousins, and might have been such own familiar friends as you and I are, Helen."

"The chivalrous name of duel dazzled you," said Helen;—"you thought of tournaments, and ladies emulous in favoring the conqueror. I remember Madame Wallenberg one day remarking that the duel was a fatal relic of a barbarous age, a custom by which brute passion and revenge were fostered."

"But what is one to do if one's insulted?" argued Marion. "If Fin MacComhal had refused to fight the son of Starno, would not his foes have branded him a coward?—I confess I do admire this ancient mode of terminating quarrels; it puts the puny stripling on a par with the rough braggart. Moreover Helen you should make allowance for a fiery temper; when Quinilla sneers at you, you are

unmoved as little Berga, while I—I have sometimes wished that we were men and thus could fight our quarrel out genteelly: yet you are twice as brave as I am—witness the day that Walter slipped from the Banshee's cliff, and clung to the old tree; the branch was giving way! you ventured boldly to the brink and caught his hand and drew him up; *my* limbs were frozen—I could not even cry for help! I died a thousand deaths—I never shall forget it."

"Not so easily, at least, as you forget your argument," said Helen.

"Thought is a nimble charioteer," cried Marion—"I am again in Germany. Suppose this young Count Ernest were stormy and insulting, and the nameless Knight who slew him, however peaceful, a gallant cavalier—he dared not brook the outrage; his courage would be questioned."

"But do you count as nothing the moral courage which prefers to suffer censure rather than deserve it."

"They may preach forbearance who never felt a cuff," said Marion. "People cannot



always keep their tempers—I am vexed enough when I return Quinilla's taunts; my penitence however is dull and indolent, while my tingling spleen is ever active. Now if this nameless Knight received a blow, 'tis probable his brute courage, as you call it, started up, his sword was drawn, and Ernest dead, before his moral courage could come forward."

"He could not have fought his battle better than you have done," said Helen laughing.—"Walter are you listening"—can you divine why Marion is so earnest in this mysterious Baron's cause?"

"Because it is mysterious," I replied.

"A marvel!" exclaimed Marion, looking at me fixedly;—"Walter without a book!—were you unravelling what puzzles *me* most in the replies which aunt so grudgingly accorded? I asked if they had shut up Julia in a convent, as her father had decreed;—her answer was, 'they *should* have done so.' Why *should* I wonder?"

"The very question I would have proposed," said Helen, "but you prevented me, and my



aunt looked so distressed I dared not put it afterwards.—Can *you* guess, Walter ?”

“Because it was her father’s will,” I answered.

“But fathers are perverse at times” said Marion ; “nay are cruel ; witness that parent in the Galway legend who condemned his son.”

“Brutus condemned both his,” I added.

“These were offenders,” observed Helen : “even as such their punishers were harsh ; but what could Julia Derentsi have done to merit such a destiny ?—We may conclude that at her father’s death she was a child, for aunt said the Baroness adopted her, and brought her up at Wallenberg ; yet this generous adoption seemed censured rather than commended.”

“And my aunt is so good-natured, too, which makes the matter more perplexing,” added Marion. “If *my* father had bequeathed *us* to a convent, I am very sure aunt would have acted just like Madame Wallenberg.”

“Unless there was some serious reason to prevent her interference,” I remarked.

“We had better think no more about it,” said Helen ; “the matter must remain a riddle,

for none of us will venture to renew a theme which makes aunt uncomfortable."

"It has already clipped an hour of our morning" observed Marion; "this discussion has cost me twenty pages of the Fairy Queen; I left Sir Guyon in a rare dilemma!—Helen, your hour is almost come; shall I help you to put the baby-house in order before I visit Grace. Berga's talent for our Granny's chiromancy is amazing; she no longer wants you for interpreter; Grace and she are as familiar in their parts of speech as you and Madame Wallenberg—Walter, where are you? on Mount Ida?—come."

"He looks as if he wished us to say, 'stay,' " cried Helen.

"Well, he shall stay if he prefer it, and he shall solve the German puzzle for us. Go into the study Walter; write down every syllable;—who knows what we may make of it!"

## CHAPTER X.

Oh ! Reader, had you in your mind  
Such stores as silent thought can bring—  
Oh ! gentle Reader, you would find  
A tale in every thing !

*Wordsworth.*

My sister little thought that an order given in mere sport was obeyed upon the instant. Not only was the recent conversation faithfully recorded, but also that ambiguous one I had overheard upon the day of Madame Wallenberg's arrival. This last had occupied my reveries for many weeks ; it was a tangled skein : I had viewed it and reviewed it at every

point; thought I had discovered various clues; and finished by embroiling it worse than ever. I was too indolent to begin a new unravelment, particularly as nothing had occurred to stimulate exertion. Madame Wallenberg's demeanour was so cheerful, and so free from ambiguity, that I had begun to think the mystery I had vainly grappled with might exist only in my brain; it was fading into something too remote to terrify, or too perplexed to be discovered. But no sooner had I, (following Marion's whimsical suggestion,) written down every syllable, than my inference was formed.—The nameless cavalier was my own father, and Julia Derentsi was my mother.—This solution at once explained the nature of our connection with Madame Wallenberg, the motives of her visit, and the singular interest she evinced for us. Every word of my aunt's reluctantly imparted information, when compared with the dialogue I had so unintentionally listened to, corroborated this conjecture. I had gathered from my uncle's conversations with the Baroness that he had been introduced at Wallenberg while travelling through Ger-

many:—it was easy to infer that my father had accompanied him, and that in this manner the acquaintance had commenced which terminated so fatally. The very epithet my aunt applied to her husband's brother and the nameless cavalier established their identity, and scarcely needed the aid of the emphatic "*my Fitzgerald*," so triumphantly distinguishing my uncle from the "unlucky scape-goat." Here also was the solution of "your father married twice—unhappily." The first union had ended in divorce; the second, (its unfavorable auspices considered,) could not have been fortunate.

We had been told that my father was of noble birth; therefore his dispute with Count Ernest could not have been occasioned by disparity of rank with either of the high-born females he had espoused. We were cut off by this duel, or by some as unpardonable offence from my mother's family. The Baroness alone, seemed to have recollected the children of her luckless niece, and, regardless of our father's errors, to have sought us out. To the same noble spirit I imputed her steady friend-

ship for my uncle—he merited her esteem, and he preserved it, notwithstanding his consanguinity to the man in whom originated those domestic troubles which my aunt so artlessly lamented.

Thus far I argued from grounds as I conceived authentic, but beyond this all was dim, and the more I tried to pierce the maze, the darker it became.—Why was my mother so early doomed to celibacy?—What was the awful interdict my uncle spoke of?—I pondered the words, “circumstanced as they are it is better they should never see the world.” We had no inclination for the world thus emphatically prohibited; but if we had, it seemed the sentence could not be reversed which shut us from it.—Perhaps this decree originated in my mother’s divorce?—But she had been from her birth, as it would seem, devoted to more strict seclusion than ourselves.—Thus the interdict, evidently, had sprung from some evil more remote.

My aunt it was clear had at first suspected Madame Wallenberg of a design to take us from the glen, but to all appearance our visitor

had perfectly concurred in the<sup>7</sup> decision which fixed us there for life. This enigma, then, remained as much involved as Margaret Wallenberg's fate. The Baroness never had let fall the slightest hint by which we could have guessed she had a daughter, neither could we possibly have surmised that she had been so deep a sufferer. The even flow of her bland gaiety appeared unruffled by regrets—did this imply insensibility or firmness?—She was by many years my uncle's senior, yet Marion herself was not more arch and humorous; she bantered without sarcasm, and rallied without spleen; looking as if her autumn were still gilded by the brightness of her spring and summer. Yet she had lost two children, the one cut off untimely, the other—My glimpses of the other shewed me a fate more to be deplored; a moral obliquity that might have humbled the gray head still so firm and lofty.

I longed to confide in Helen, but rectitude forbade me to divulge what accident alone had revealed to me, and what was rendered sacred by the wishes of my adopted parents. Another motive for concealment now presented itself—



my sister's peace might be disturbed; that world at present so lightly given up, with a gay commentary on its irksome and absurd restraints, might be regretted were the barrier revealed which would convert choice into necessity. Helen's heart was pure and sensitive, reverent of truth and heroic virtue; these high qualities were always embodied in her legendary fictions, enlivened by occasional touches of comic humour; her flights into the sphere of awe and terror were digressions to please Marion; but I could perceive that the region of the *natural* was more congenial to her sentiments than the ether of romance; therefore mysteries and perplexities in which Marion's ærial fancy would float untired, might, if involving those she loved, become to Helen oppressive and tormenting.

Besides those passages already noticed there were other *impenetrables* in my memoranda, particularly in the lines which recorded the indignation of my aunt towards some person whom she reviled for having deserted us.—Was it my mother, and was the divorce a consequence of that desertion? This was a pro-

bable deduction, yet I felt reluctant to admit it. To favor my repugnance I referred to the words "poor Julia," by which the divorced had been apostrophized.—*Poor* in our mystifying idiom is often a term of endearment;—had Cræsus been our countryman, beloved and maligned, he would have been lamented as "poor Cræsus." There was no such significant epithet bestowed upon Margaret Wallenberg; I caught at the idea that she was the reviled, for I was inconceivably averse from believing that my mother had forsaken us. As the children of her unhappy predecessor we were odious to, and abandoned by our step-mother. I felt unspeakable satisfaction at this arrangement, and endeavoured to substantiate my conclusion by looking back into the "dim and distant past."

I had had glimmering ideas of a fine mansion which I once inhabited; of nurses fondling and obedient. My sisters had been haunted by the selfsame unaccountable reminiscences—Marion's were the liveliest and strangest, but she protested they were dreams: Helen's though less improbable were more shadowy;

and mine were fainter still. In childhood we used to prattle of the golden home we came from; Marion would take the lead and tell us of a tall, terrible-looking ghost with sloe-black flashing eyes, who was with her in her sleep-life, as she called it, and made her cry, and scolded her for crying; adding thereto what we thought witch-matter, all of which she vowed that she had dreamed. Helen and I were easily persuaded to join in her belief, and to refer our fading recollections to the same fantastic source. I now began to think this sleep-life actual, and to wish the figures would stand out distinctly; but Marion's flashing Lady-spirit was the only shadow that came forward, and whether I should address it as Julia Derentsi or as Margaret Wallenberg, remained questionable.

At the sound of footsteps I snatched up my papers and withdrew to my own chamber. It seemed as if the desultory current of my thoughts had all at once found a fixed direction, a definite purpose. Registering on my tablets, as a rule of action, a remark of Madame Wallenberg's, that it is from observation of

character and of the every-day circumstances of existence that the mind derives its best experience, I determined, in adherence to this mental process, closely to investigate, to minute each occurrence of my life, and to arrange my memoranda at leisure ; in time this journalising became a craving habit.

For a day or two my sisters, in our confidential hours, occasionally recurred to the *Deutsch-Mährchen*,\* so named by Helen. Marion was exhaustless in conjecture ; Helen's comments always ended in—" How I pity Madame Wallenberg !" —neither sister ever touched the clue which would have led them to the point I stood at.

But all discussion was soon absorbed by Kitty Reily's approaching nuptials. Notice had been given at Ballygobbin chapel, said Mrs. Mulligan, and in another week, please Father Crooney, the boys an' girls, tight an' tidy, would cover the buckle to 'the bottle o' punch,' and help the piper to discharge his dues for rattling the old bones of his poor Gran'mother.

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\* German legend.

—The Geraldine—God bless him ! would pay the marriage fee, and help to fill the pewter.

Marion was now in gay *allegro* ; the thing was to be done in style, she said, for Kitty was the *properest* girl in the glen, and had a stocking full of coppers to her portion. Blind Johnny handled the pipes to the full as well as Conlan ; his music was more ancient and more touching ; to be thrown into the back-ground would break the creature's heart. Conlan should hold the hat and earn the fine ; but she herself would pay Johnny for ' the battle of Clontarf.'—Helen was quite as anxious as her sister ; the baby factorers were splitting, sorting, weaving, and making the old walls ring to " Green grow the rushes O." Mats were to be made for all visitors whose homes were distant ; an old oak chamber of the ruin, adjoining the school-room, was to be cleared of rubbish for the marriage feast ; two of the lately farrowed *bonnaveens*, just one moon old, were promised by my aunt, and Katy promised to barbecue the pigmies. Even the cow and Lanty Maw contributed their meed unconsciously ; for bawn and stable doors were sentenced to be taken off the hinges, and mounted on the

wash tressles for dinner tables. The glen-boys, eagerly submitting to conscription, assembled every dawn to the drumming of a cracked saucepan, and vigorously shouting "the wedding of Ballynamona," marched under Brigadier General Slauveen to mend the causeway, to dislodge the rats, and crowd away the rubbish which choked up the old oak chamber. Puffy-cheeked angels, wolves pasturing on human heads, dragons and other mythologic cattle, once high in frieze and fresco, were unceremoniously shovelled out, with the grim *genius loci*, a noseless bust of Pope Fergusius. Brackets weary of their saintly effigies, and cornice-fragments stamped with armorial bearings were huddled within an enormous chimney-place that stood out from the chamber walls, a melancholy void, which erst had canopied, perhaps, the roasted hog of Anglo Saxon orgies, or held within its ample sweep a Lord President's retainers.

All hands were active, even to my unskilful ones, and all heads employed in planning some attainable donation for the bride. Our Granny's spinning-wheel kept up a humming symphony



to little Berga's snap-reel ; even I contributed my mite, an antique ring I found within the ruin, serving the bride elect for amulet. Helen's humble wardrobe grew daily scantier ; she had so many things that Kitty wanted and she could do without. Marion having vainly tried to stretch her little shoe to Kitty's foot, went boldly to my aunt and begged her pair of second best ; and the Baroness, discovering that Kitty's sweetheart had more love than lucre, made him proprietor of a trim fishing-craft, the only thing on earth besides his Kitty that he longed for. The news of this amazing bounty drew forth a stave so wild and shrill from our retainers, that little Berga, deeming it the voice of the seven thunders, fell upon her knees and poured out her sins with a cataract velocity. Granny stood aghast, apprehensive that the *wee wee womanie* would evaporate in words, and Slauveen and I, who had been heralds of the news and witnesses of this explosion, stood in rapt amazement : *he* doubted whether it were the actual dame Dumb-be-dead-alive or some twin exotic gifted like Quinilla, *I* questioned whether the verbose



deluge proceeded from the oral faculty of our little Quietist or from some hostile essence that had got possession of her.

On the evening of the day which had ushered in such wealth to the betrothed, we were assembled in the study, *tutti quanti*; my sisters, as had been customary for several days harping on the teemful subject which engrossed them. Kitty's finery was minutely itemed: her flowered wedding gown; her bran new scarlet cloak; her stuff petticoat, sky blue and elegantly quilted; her sprig muslin cap and clear muslin apron; her barcelonas, connamaras; even the shoes, as good as new, which aunt bestowed;—all met with notice and approval. Then came her farming stock, her fishing-smack and "*bit o' furnitory*,"—"She will be so very comfortable," said Marion.

"Not more than she deserves," rejoined Helen;—"Kitty is the best girl in the glen."

"*Best* is a high term," said the Baroness; "how is she the best, Helen?"

"She is so good a daughter," was the prompt reply.

“And so good a sister,” added Marion; “she risked her life to snatch her little brother from a floating ice-bank.”

“She would not marry till her mother granted her consent,” said Helen, “although she doted upon William.”

“Now don’t you think,” enquired Marion, “that we may call her the best, the very best?”

There was no reply; the Baroness looked grave and thoughtful; my sisters were briskly knitting, too heedful of their work to pause for recollection.

“Now don’t you think,” repeated Marion.

My uncle interrupted her—“Helen has your legendary lore deserted you?”

“To be sure it has,” exclaimed my aunt, “and all her other wits into the bargain;—man, woman, and child think only of this wedding—I’m half bewitched myself.—Next week I hope our senses will return, and our pleasant evening tales—that was a pretty story about the high priest’s grand-children.”

“From Josephus,” observed Marion, heedless of my uncle’s loud and repeated hems—

“The death of Aristobulus. How beautifully Helen pictured the poor youth!—Mariamne too; how dreadful to be married to the man that killed one’s brother!—There, I have dropped a stitch!—provoking—Helen’s stocking will be finished first.—Were you ever at a wedding Madame Wallenberg?”

The features of the Baroness had assumed a deeper shade of thoughtfulness at every point of Marion’s speech—“A wedding!” she exclaimed; “was I ever at a wedding?—Oh, what a fatal wedding have I been witness to!”

Marion looked up, threw away her knitting, and flew to Madame Wallenberg—“Did I say any thing to vex you?—Did I?—Good gracious now I recollect!—what *shall* I do?—I forgot; indeed, indeed, I forgot.—”

Down fell *Cicero de officiis* on which my aunt had lodged her working tackle—thimbles, shears, and bodkin made a hideous clatter. My uncle threw the window open and inhaled a deep draught of the pure atmosphere. “I cannot stoop unto the lip-cheat Marion;” said the Baroness “your words *were* heart-search-

ing ; they brought before me wedding pomp, a good and gentle child—the best, the very best !—*she* had no brother to be careful of, no mother to obey, but gratitude in that fond, timid creature was as powerful as filial love. She too would have renounced the man she doted on, for me—I saw her married to that man—with *my* consent.—Your words brought back these fatal nuptials, Marion ; they brought back events more fatal still.—’Tis silly at my years, my child, to have to learn fortitude, but there are some affections which are ever green.—Walter do not look so sorrowful : read to me.”

There was an attempt to smile, but the effort only made the pain she suffered more apparent. Marion stood tearful and conscience-stricken ; I fumbled for a book, so nervous and so absent that folio after folio followed the prostrate Cicero.

“ What a lovely evening !” exclaimed Helen ; “ do look at that glorious sunset Madame Wallenberg ; look at those leaves ;—Marion your blackbird perches on a gilded branch.”

It was indeed a glorious sunset ; the little headland was lapped in sparkling wavelets ; rocks, woods and hills were tinged with a golden red ; the water-falls and alder-leaves were whispering ; a fishing boat was pushing from the point through gurgling ripples ; and now its oars were scattering sun-showers on the heaths and grasses, and now its keel broke the smoother mirror of the distant bay, marking its seaward passage with a glittering furrow. Helen's well timed digression had collected us around the window ; there was a long silence. Marion drew a stool to Madame Wallenberg's feet, and letting fall the wedding-hose, pressed the Baroness's hand, as if to make amends for her unhidden trespass. My aunt and uncle sat apart ; the former stitching with all her might, but looking flushed and disconcerted : the latter vacantly regarding our prostrate Greeks and Romans.

" 'Tis a Quaker's meeting," muttered my aunt at length.

The Baroness turned a kindly look towards her hostess.

“Is tranquil and beautiful heart-silence peculiar to those mild enthusiasts my good friend?—if so they are a happy sisterhood.”

The light tone she assumed was evidently artificial: it struck me at once that hers was the defensive cheerfulness of a person earnestly sorrowful, yet too proudly resolute to wear solemn looks. My aunt, as if the Baroness’s speech required a little studying, laid down her work and stared deliberately at a lonely goat which was musing on an opposite crag in bearded stateliness.

“Those clouds seem rolling to my fatherland,” said the Baroness; “they exhort me to a long, long journey.”

These words upset my aunt’s speculations; she looked wistfully at her guest, not clearly comprehending to what journey she alluded.

“Edward,” continued the Baroness, addressing my uncle, “we have nothing more to deliberate upon; old times and trials have had their share of our attention; the tale is worn out my friend; to-morrow—”

“To-morrow!” we repeated breathlessly.

My uncle stooped to collect his scattered



folios; the Baroness viewed us with a smile, but it was a smile sadder far than tears. Her emotion passed away—"To-morrow," she continued gaily, "we begin to talk of leave-taking—only to *talk* Walter—you must give up your lady-love; remember I have other cavaliers to humour. Baron Wallenberg waits for me in London, and my son's letters are quite reproachful; they rail at my knights of Erin; I dare not own how much I am attached to them—a future visit might be interdicted."

"You will never come again," said Marion, with a half sob—"I know that you will never come again."

"But I will come little ghost-seer, to mar your prophecy; and I will bring you such a spectre-story!—Helen what shall I bring you?"

"Only the love you promised to me—Will you remember *me*?—I must remember *you*; indeed, indeed I love you as a daughter!"

The Baroness rose and hurriedly paced the room.—"Not as a daughter, Helen: not as a daughter; love me with any love but that;—I could not get subject matter for a story,



Helen; a stranger history, a more affecting, than even that selected from Josephus—Mariamne hated her brother's murderer, *my* daughter married the murderer of hers."

We looked at each other in mute dismay; my uncle covered his face; my aunt with uplifted hands appeared to deprecate some terrible disclosure. The Baroness was too much excited to perceive that my sisters and myself were more concerned than surprised.

"It was open slaughter certainly," she ejaculated, as if pursuing her own train of bitter recollection; "yes it was open slaughter; my son was killed in honorable combat; and his sister—his sister! Helen there are more harrowing accidents in *real* life—in *my* life—than in your romances—*Daughter!*—call yourself by any name but that!"

She hastily left the room; my uncle followed her; we were undecided how to act; to soothe might be obtrusive and impertinent. My aunt, as if a ponderous weight which prevented her from breathing were suddenly removed, drew a long sigh—"Didn't I tell you," she

exclaimed, "didn't I tell you that no philosophy can cure the heart-burn?—'Tis a flimsy veil that serves us well in sunshine, but a storm soon rends it all to tatters. This comes of having children!—fancy a body being forced to hate one's own flesh and blood! This Baroness is prodigious stern at bottom; right generous to the good, but shews, you see, no mercy to the bad, nor even the indifferent; for after all, the man who married Margaret Wallenberg was no more a murderer than I am, although he killed a man—he killed the Count in open day—there was nothing underhand as in the case of Herod—no juggling, drowning, nor contrivances; no malice, not a bit, only a boiling passion—so you must not think too ill of him.—I wish I could say something in favor of that Margaret."

She gathered up her scattered threads and bustled off, leaving us to cogitate at leisure.

We were indisposed for conversation, and sat watching the ruddy sunset stealing up the mountains, our gloom encreasing with the lengthening shadows. Helen's sympathy for

Madame Wallenberg was so keen, that I rejoiced I had withheld my suspicions of our near relationship. Not a word had fallen, even during the recent ebullition, from which our consanguinity could have been inferred by those not previously awakened to attention. On my first confused retrospect it appeared to me indeed that little of any nature had transpired beyond what I already was acquainted with ; but, when I had recorded the substance of our evening's conversation, I found the heaviness of mind which overhung me was combatted by a growing satisfaction as I eagerly perused my diary. Madame Wallenberg's words were decisive as to the innocence of my mother ; none other save Julia Derentsi could have been designed by the " good and gentle."

I felt relieved of an oppressive yet indefinite misgiving as this conviction flashed upon me—My aunt's good nature might have warped her judgment to pity the deserted wife, but there was no weak side of false indulgence through which the Baroness could have been assailed.

Every relentless comment on the daughter sanctified the niece; she became hallowed in my tenderest affections, and in proportion as my love for her kindled into filial reverence, so did my dislike for Margaret Wallenberg encrease.

## CHAPTER XI.

“Uprouse ye then, my merry merry men,  
It is our *wedding* day.”

SLAUVEEN'S shrill *réveil* awoke me on the following morning. I descended to our little parlour, somewhat dubious how to accost Madame Wallenberg, but her polished and feminine hilarity at once reassured me; nay I fancied that to banish any awkwardness which the ebullition of the previous evening might have caused, her gaiety was more lavishly dispensed than ever; her images, though serious, were all upon a laughing ground.

My aunt's hospitable duties were suspended ; the cups remained unfilled and the eggs forgotten in the saucepan, while the Baroness recounted what she entitled, quaintly, " the spring-green love-adventure of *Fräulein Berga* ;" her arbitrary treatment of a grey-bearded gigantic *Rittersmann*, who, in his youth, had been one of Prussian Frederick's far-famed Patagonians. Besides being twice as old, he was twice as tall upon his knees as Berga upon tip-toe. They were reciprocal exaggerators of opposite magnitudes, he of the augmentative she of the diminutive, setting off each other beautifully. Berga, after coquetting a quarter of a century with this son of Anak, discarded him because his four front teeth, which he affirmed had been loosened by a bullet shot at Zorndoff, fell out. He died of love, or of old age, for he was eighty. Berga called herself his executioner, gave up coquetting, and fell at once into the prim, grave, silent, matron ; mourned outwardly for years, and inwardly to the present moment ; proving herself as faithful to the memory of her old and only love, as to the House of Wallenberg.



Thus did the Baroness bring forward some incident to banish our restraint, arraying it in the grotesque or the pathetic, or blending both. It mattered little who or what her personages were—poor, humble, ignorant, or feeble, they caught hold of our affections, and chained us to their fortunes. My uncle, however, participated little in our enjoyment: he was grave and thoughtful; Madame Wallenberg's efforts to induce a smile were unavailing; an incautious touch had opened ill-healed wounds; and feelings for a long time in abeyance, had revived.

The Baroness at length drew from her finger a signet ring, viewed it for a moment, and said—"Friendship perhaps, like gold, requires alloy to temper it, or rather like iron becomes from blows more closely welded—ours Edward has been cemented by rough strokes—this is your parting gift; your wedding ring has not been better guarded than your billet-seal—the device is humble; I had *andenken* cut beneath it—the word is almost worn out, and yet it will speak when I am dumb; it will bid you to *remember*—"

“Madame Wallenberg !” exclaimed my uncle in a reproachful tone.

“Yes,” rejoined the Baroness, “it will bid you to remember Madame Wallenberg; the errors of the dead will be forgiven.” She turned to my aunt—“Shall you be jealous my good friend if I bequeath his own gift to your husband?”

Her tone was neither tremulous nor solemn; she always spoke of death without emotion.

“Sure,” exclaimed my aunt, with a look of recognition, extending her hand for the ring; “sure it is the very seal, with the little cow in the middle, which puzzled me so much when your letter came to hand—I thought the word was Greek—what does the cow signify I wonder?”

“It is not an emblem of the Geraldines,” cried Marion, taking the ring; “their crest displays a more fantastic animal—a family relic is it uncle?—what *can* it illustrate?—Ah! now I recollect—The story is as old as the Geraldine rebellion; it relates to the five brothers of that darling Earl of Kildare, who made Cardinal Wolsey look so blank before

the King and Council. These five brothers, (uncles of Thomas the conspirator) were seized in Ireland upon suspicion, by King Henry's liege-men, forced into a ship, and sent away to England. They were stout of heart, knowing they had no hand in the rebellion, until one of them found out the ship was called "the Cow." He thereupon bemoaned himself so piteously that the others thought he was demented; his brethren joined him however when he revealed, that by a prophecy yet unfulfilled, five brothers of an Earl were to reach England in the body of a cow, and never to return. The poor Geraldines, sure enough, were put to death, and the prophecy fulfilled."

When Marion had arrived at this part of her tradition Madame Wallenberg replaced her ring and withdrew to the window. My uncle followed her, threw the sash open, flung the crumbs of our repast to a callow brood of chickens, and then commenced a whispered conversation with our visitor.

"Lord Gerald Fitzgerald," resumed Marion.

"Who?" exclaimed the Baroness, abruptly turning to my sister.

“ The infant brother of silken Thomas to be sure, Baroness ; he was saved by stratagem. Lord Gerald’s adventures were very wonderful.”

“ Bless you !” cried my aunt, “ don’t mind her Madame Wallenberg ; she is chattering of things that happened ages back ! There are more Johns than one you know,” she added, significantly nodding at the Baroness, “ and so there are more Gerald’s.—Walter, why, what on earth can you be thinking of ?—Helen, child, tie up that straggling woodbine ; ’twill poke our eyes out—Marion, tell Katy she may take away the breakfast things.—Come Baroness, come into the dairy ; I’ll shew you as lovely a real cream cheese as ever was wrapped in nettles—May be, Mr. Fitzgerald, you would look after Lanty Maw ; he has broken through the paddock-fence. This cock-and-a-bull’s tale of a cow has kept poor Katy from her breakfast.”

I had little time for taking notes. Our Brigadier General and his pioneers were winding through the gap towards the cottage, squandering the melody of song and saucepan.

The Irish are profuse of every thing, particularly of noise, and I think our glen-boys had more varieties of that commodity than any other boys over a year and a quarter. If half the ingenuity applied in Ireland to institute an uproar were applied to forward agriculture, some of our political economists might be curtailed of much wise speculation. The present hubbub grew more energetic as it neared; I stopped my ears; Helen ran away, and Marion ran to meet it. The latter speedily returned in hysterics of delight—A select deputation had been nominated to express the thanks of the betrothed to Madame Wallenberg; shrieks of “*Jarmany* for ever, an’ a happy death to her bountiful Baronship,” split the air.

The spokesman proper now advanced—  
“ ’Tisn’t dirty coppers *she’ll* fling us, I’ll be bound, disparaging her fingers, but yellow-hammers, *tkrie-na-helah*, and good thirteeners—Screech boys, screech for her glorious Highness; don’t stand for trifles; screech as if ould Noll was kickin’ you !”

The notes of admiration, now shrilled horribly, brought Katy with the handle of the pope's head to disperse the rioters.

The day at length arrived, in full autumnal splendour, "the day of Kitty's wedding oh!"—a memorable day in the annals of our glen—It healed a feud, as old as the hag's wars,\* between the great O'Reily's and O'Driscols. The bride, glowing like a full blown cabbage-rose, and rustling in glazed stuff and *callimanky* came, before tumult could imp its wing, to shower blessings, thick as wool, upon the Geraldines, and pay her duty to the Baroness. The bride's-maids, fluttering in gay ribbons, the hoods of their blue cloaks thrown back to shew the maiden snood and the unwonted sleekness of their redundant tresses, stood decorously aloof, drawn up within our little paddock, their downcast looks mimicked by the sniggering boys who lurked ripe for fun and mischief in the back-ground, restrained to the demure by Grace McQuillan's keen espial. Our Granny sat with the *Fräulein* beneath a

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\* The wars of Queen Elizabeth with the Irish, were so called.



royal porch for them especially erected, *forenent* the study window.

I wish a Wilkie could have seen them, Berga in her stiff German vesture, solemn as a tombstone, her eyes as indivertibly fixed upon a furze-bush as erst they had been upon the plate-rack, her heart, perhaps, inditing the Patagonian's epitaph;—Grace in her Celtico-Scythic costume, majestically grasping the sceptral holly-wand, masking her arch and almost girlish humour beneath the dignity becoming to her high prerogative, and turning an eye sinister upon a blooming adult of her flock, around whose ruddy mouth broad dimples were meandering, drawn forth by Dennis *Ogue*, who stood with folded hands, and lips pinched *up*, to *murther* her decorum. Our Granny's dexter orb gently admonished a row of *minikins* upon her right hand, Helen's merry brood, whose shining faces peeping through thick rings of golden hair demonstrated the virtues of a soap-polish. But Grace could not reprove the shout of admiration spontaneously emitted as the joyous troop surveyed each other's finery: stuff frocks and



blue checked *muckingers* provided by the Baroness ; nor could she fetch up courage to rebuke the gleeful laugh which burst forth irrepressible, every time the holly-wand, horizontally extended, compelled a giddy straggler to fall back into the ranks.

The foreground filled up by these tiny actors was hemmed in by Slauveen's light infantry, in martial files extending across the roadway, the escort of the modest bridegroom Bill O' Driscol. Bill occupied the central post in spic-span felt, ratteen, and corduroy ; his honey-colored locks combed close and sleek around his roguish countenance—now, peering at the gentry with a sheep-like look, he pulled his *glib* and scraped his left foot gracefully ; now turning on the grinners of his dazzling train with “ boys behave yourself ; I wonder at ye ! ” His retinue, in truth, was dazzling, for every jacket and coateen, however patched and threadbare, was adorned with rows of huge brass buttons, bright as Achilles' buckler, and every rust colored *caubeen* was set up rakishly at one side, and looped to a cockade which vexed the rainbow. The *tissys* and thirteeners of

her darling Baronship, meant for more home consumption, were lavished by these lads of metal upon the buttons, to shew their spirit in *doing the genteel* by Bill O'Driscol, and lightening the hard-ware of Ballygobbin. An acre of heath-flowers, bound into bouquets, was planted in their button-holes. Katy contemned this last adornment; it gave them, she observed, too *countrified* a look, and took from the killing cut of their appearance. Each cavalier flourished a verdant oak-twigg from which jingling tags of metal and other curious instruments of deafening music dangled. General Slauveen headed the detachment; he was distinguished from his obedient kerns less by his consequential strut than by insignia ever memorable—Quinilla's belt and buckle—the belt and buckle of the duck-pond—and Quinilla's scarlet feather; that feather once drooping gracefully even to the nose of our departed cousin, then, (dire vicissitude,) crushed into verdant mud and angular distortion; now furbished up anew, propped by dexterous contrivance into the martial perpendicular, and stuck into the gallant cocked-hat of her

soldierly Patricius. Some indescribable sensation made me wince at sight of these unblest mementos, and suddenly recoil from the window, whither we had crowded to inspect the bridal train. The drone of Conlan's bag-pipe now addressed the assembly.

"Come Walter, come: you'll lose it all," cried Marion.

The Bride had made her hundred reverences, had left the cottage, and stood culprit-like in front of Grace McQuillan, twitching her sprigged apron, awaiting fearfully the wife's exordium—"Whisht will ye!—hisht I say!" thundered by the General struck all things dumb; the bag-pipes ceased; the crowing cocks and children, the very ducks left off their cackle, awed by the sonorous voice of Grace McQuillan, dealing out her pithy apothegms.

"Kitty *a cushla* don't be stomachful; think less of your wedding garment than of your working gown; the penny for the rainy day is better than the one-pound-one in sunshine Kitty; 'tis not great gains but little good-haps make us comfortable; heaps gallop off but

handfuls stay at home ; don't fault the spade your husband digs with Kitty ; ill-luck is never mended by ill-humour ; *smother your sauciness* ; one spark of a keenogue\* would burn Ballygobbin ! if bees have stings remember they have honey-bags ; a bad potato-season might bring a thriving autumn ;—don't be knowledgeable *eroo*, let the *man* be master—the girls' eyes are on you Kitty ; a smiling wife makes a score o' weddings, a sour wife makes a pitful of old maids : never leave off your reverence for them above, your love for them below you Kitty.—And now *Bail o' Dia duibh a cushla !*†—Go home to your tidy bachelor—Father Croony will sermon the remainder.”

A fierce hurroo and swirling of cockades wound up this excellent discourse.

The train was now in motion, swaying to and fro like poppies in a hurricane, but a second authoritative “whisht !” spoiled the first bar of “Corporal Casy,” and “halt !” brought boys and girls to a stand-still.—“Would ye

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\* Turf sod kindled.    † Blessing of God to you my darling.

leave the best half o' the company behind, ye negurs?" vociferated the commanding officer—"wait for the gentlefolk!"

"Is it our quality to tread in your heel-mark you impudent rogue you!—is it our masthers you mean!" cried Katy, who had stood puffing a pensive pipe, wavering whether at once to join the wedding shew, or to stick to the *piggeens* she was embalming for the wedding dinner—" 'twould be well in their way indeed—I like your audacity!"

Slauveen's response was an inimitable stare of wondering contempt; he deliberately advanced, made a stand before the paddock, neighed, lowed, and snorted. Lanty on the instant stalked from his doorless stable and joined the martial throng—a staggering calf kicked up its hind legs, whisked its tail, and followed.—The cow was next enlisted by a deep-sounding bellow—alternate grunt and squeak allured the pig and all the tender porkers—the ducklings shook their wings and waddled from the pond, obedient to a qua-ake sustained until the hindmost was on its legs and marching—cocks, hens, and chickens, toddled off in turn

—grimalkin followed with her litter—a bray, wild echoing, forced a meditative ass from his recumbent posture. Even Quinilla's pug, though yelping spitefully, was overcome by sharp temptation. These raw recruits, hailed by successive shouts of exultation, were soon embodied with the regulars, and marched off with a clamour too intense for meek remonstrance to prevail.

My aunt grew pale with horror when the whole squadron of *irrationals* rounded the gap and became lost to vision. Not a kitten lagged to feel the clutch of Katy, who had rushed like a tornado to reclaim the *black mail* so impudently levied: she dared not however trust herself beyond the pale of our protection.

But to describe the frolics of this merry forenoon is altogether hopeless. The glen was active even to its peat-sods, which were hurled aloft, merely that the atmosphere might share in the confusion. The stay-at-homes were equally inclining to the topsy-turvy—Marion walked up and down in idle flutter, marking the changes of the hurly burly—Helen too, was restless as a bird's wing—considering my mood-



ful temperament, I was exhilarated extremely ; and even the grave Elders of our household would, ever and anon, protrude a head to catch the distant uproar.

Mrs Mulligan, though very much affronted, and bent on *scurrafungeing* Lanty and the cow, never relaxed in dinner preparation. The perfume of roast pig, black pudding, and *drisheens*\* might have provoked the mandibles of Epictetus. The *corcran*† emitted an ambrosial steam, for Katy, to save time and keep the old oak chamber *nate* for dancing, had peeled the mealy kidneys, crushed them to *brutheen*‡ and smothered them with milk and a sprinkling of salt butter. The roast was done to half a turn, and ready to be dished—"But neither crube nor trotter," said Katy, "shall walk out of this kitchen till every mother soul that son o' Crommell *slewdered* us out of, shall walk back!"—The dinner-fetchers, however, were too acute to face the fractious Priestess without an adequate oblation. The decoyed strays were driven home lamenting, and Katy was propitiated with

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\* Sheep's fry. † Large pot. ‡ Mashed potatoes.



a ribbon for her cap, cribbed out of a cockade.

"There's no use in talking," cried my aunt, as she watched the dinner pages freighted with the savory messes, dexterously wending from the cottage to the ruin—"there *is* no use in talking Baroness; we may as well give up the day; indeed it is as good as gone already.—If one wedding makes a score we shall have a score too many. What a racket!—Pray Heaven these people don't get fuddled!—Helen you forebade *scalteen* I hope—Ah! there goes Katy to the dinner—'tis well *we* got a morsel—Katy come here; keep the boys sober, I beseech you."

"There's no occasion," answered Katy, bridling, "there's not a lad from nine an' thirty down to a *thackeen*\* would break the hand and word he gave the masther. Our boys may play tricks on tyrannisers but they'd scorn to insult their consciences. 'Tis time for *you* to know their manners Ma'am."

"There now!" exclaimed my aunt, arching her brows most piteously, "she's gone off in a

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\* Little girl.

huff!—Just fancy her fighting for those very plagues she vowed vengeance on, an hour ago ! But that's the way with all the Irish—either staring or stark mad ! they'll blow your brains out, and then blow out their own for sheer remorse."

"A strange people," said the Baroness, musing; "daring and deeply sensitive, yet full of levity; familiar, yet profoundly reverent; vindictive and forgiving; a compound of attractives and repellents."

"Repellents !" echoed Marion, "repellents did you mean Madame Wallenberg?—our poor dear Irish !—Helen wo'n't you speak for them?"

"They want no intercessor with the Baroness," said Helen; "she understands them now as well as we do; and who can read the Irish peasant's character without discerning through all its reckless impulses, a chivalric and generous fidelity?"

"More attractive than repulsive at any rate," rejoined Marion—"are not the four O'Carrols darlings?—and the Driscols—look at Susan Driscol!"

"Marion," said the Baroness, "you are

angry ; do you forget that I have envied the mother of your peasant bride ?”

My uncle shifted his chair. The Baroness glanced at him a moment and resumed—“ *My* study of the Irish character, Marion, has been most salutary ; it has taught me to make allowance for natures fiery and rash ; it has taught me that acts once ascribed to premeditation might have been caused by the recklessness of an uncurbed, impetuous spirit, tested perhaps too harshly—it has taught me to be lenient ; almost to forgive.”

A slight ejaculation uttered by my uncle made me observe him closely ; there was a silent upturning of the eyes which expressed thankfulness and joy—“ She alludes to my poor father,” thought I.—My sisters looked at the Baroness, as if seeking to penetrate her meaning, or awaiting further comment ; but perceiving that she was comprehended by the person she desired to satisfy, Madame Wallenberg arose and took a book.—It opened at the *Antigone* of Sophocles, and I was required to translate it—“ Do Walter,” said my aunt, “ read us something ; ’twill drive this wedding

from our heads, and keep us in our seats—Marion makes me giddy—I want to whip this shirt-frill.”

Nervous at the task imposed, (than which to execute, the castigation of the shirt-frill would have been preferred,) I laboured through this dramatic master-piece, like a panting school-boy, and found myself at length translating the pathetic address of Antigone when dragged to the fatal cavern by the satellites of Creon.

“Must I then descend, young, full of life, unlamented, into the chambers of the grave!—Light of Heaven, farewell!—Oh tomb! oh dungeon home! eternal resting-place! Destiny horrible, immitigable!—this dismal track will lead me to my kindred dead; will unite *me*, the last and the most wretched, to my miserable race.”

“That’s enough! that’s enough of it in all conscience,” exclaimed my aunt, with an impatient jerk;—“Madame Wallenberg will excuse the rest I dare say.—For my part I had rather hear a shout that would split my ears than such a story.—Pretty models for young people!—Those Greeks were proper savages

to bury one alive for next to nothing—But 'tis a pack of shocking lies, I know it is—Foredoomed by lying oracles indeed—Just look at Marion; she takes it all for gospel—Why children, you don't believe that string of horrors happened!"

"Helen," said Marion, in a low voice, "do you believe in destiny? Granny does."

"Believe in fiddle-sticks!—you'd fret a saint!" exclaimed my aunt.—"Believe in the laws of God—believe you can't evade them—that's the point.—Destiny indeed!—a nice excuse for crimes and blunders!—If a man to cross a pit trust to a crazy plank and tumble in, call it his folly not his destiny; I have no patience with fatality disciples, who lay to heaven's door their own imprudences."

"And yet," said Marion, "I have a leaning to this same fatality—Had I been born a Greek of heathen times, I dared not have consulted oracles, for were the doom predicted me, malignant, from very horror I might conduce to its accomplishment."

I had laid down my book, and was considering the argument. A flashing recollection

called forth by Marion's emphatic words made me look towards our elders.—My uncle and the Baroness exchanged rapid glances of intelligence, characterized by something of dismay; but my aunt's countenance was the very type of consternation; her eyes were riveted on Marion as if my sister were actually about to accomplish a doom terrible as that awarded to Antigone, while the person so intently watched, unconscious of the terror she excited, continued to pour forth chapters of warning and prognostic delivered by our Irish oracles, Warlocks, and Banshees, all of which she strenuously maintained had been fulfilled.

Helen, taking the ground my aunt had so suddenly abandoned, skilfully combated the enthusiast, referring prodigy and prophecy to a higher source than human agency, and contending that prudence, in most of the alleged instances, would have baffled these self-constituted fortune-tellers.

“To be sure,” exclaimed my aunt, resuming her self-possession and her shirt-frill, “to be sure it would—that's right, Helen!—prudence is a noble virtue!—By prudence one may



avert even—I mean to say that—that—that the bride and bridegroom should be prudent.”

This unexpected climax, which brought us from our altitudes to the day’s humble frolic, made us laugh; even my uncle and Madame Wallenberg, hitherto serious and abstracted, smiled at the whimsical wind-up.

“*Quant on parle de l’âne, on en voit les oreilles,*” said my uncle. “Behold the bride and bridegroom !”

“Now coming up the path—’tis Kitty and her husband sure enough.—Pray Heaven they are full of no disaster !”

“Not they,” said Helen; “Kitty’s face is bright as her new ribbon !”

“I wish they would walk faster then, and put us out of pain; it strikes me, William looks a little non-plused.”

When the radiant pair found out they were espied, the scrapes and curtsies, limiting their progress to a snail’s pace, severely tried my poor aunt’s philosophy. At length they reached the casement, and between blushes and beg-pardons were delivered of their embassy, the

gist of which set forth, that if our honors would bestow our company just to hear blind Johnny play *the Groves o' Blarney* 'twould put the poor ould man upon the pig's back with *consate*. The dinner was cleared out, the room was *clane* as a *crame*-cheese, and rows o' benches for the quality, an' Johnny's throne with laurel boughs so beautiful, an' all the lads so *rasonaële* !”

My uncle nodded when Marion turned her entreating eyes towards him; my aunt bent hers on Madame Wallenberg. Kitty, dropping as many dips as words, hoped her honorable Baronship would just consider how all their hearts would jump for joy at a single sight of her. Still they would be loth to make her come against her will; 'twould be the transportation of um altogether, if she would *condesind*, but no *offince* in life if she would not.

No one could perform a gracious act more graciously than Madame Wallenberg.—She had been longing to hear blind Johnny, and had hoped to be invited; the evening was delightful, and—

“ Didn’t I tell you so ? ” interrupted Kitty ;  
“ didn’t I tell you so, William Driscoll ? —  
You’ll b’lieve *me* Bill another time.”

And off they scampered, without leave-take, to spread the glorious tidings.

The bridal troop was drawn up on the causeway, to conduct us to the ball-room. Never perhaps was wild mountain scenery more impressively relieved with living figures ; the party-colored wedding-group at once rude and singular, momentarily encreasing in size and strangeness, for skiff after skiff, freighted with tardy friends, approached from the outer bay with joyous cheers, and landed at the ruin. Lake and land, torrent-bed and dizzy cliff, had each a gipsy group of wild rejoicers. The baby rioters, variously dispersed, were plashing in a fastened boat, clinging to a mast, or toppling down a heather-bank, all screaming with delight.

Conlan, perched on Katy’s salting tub, coaxing the balmy air into his modulation-bag, was, for the nonce, prime agent of festivity, puffing *Molowny’s jig* in measure so precipitate that his votaries spun round and snapped their

fingers as if bitten by *tarantule*. Slauveen, not satisfied with the moving influence of this exciting music, whistled away with all his might, while heel and toe, and head and arms were shaken as vigorously as if their proprietor meant to part with them ; even Berga seemed bewitched ; *her* head, too, was nimbly nodding, and but for Grace, who guarded her discreetly from the whirring throng, her feet might have been detected, for the first time in forty years, performing a *coupée*.

The jig was suddenly wound up at our approach, and the drone merged beautifully into *Sheel na Guira*, newly christened, "the Wallenberg Gavotte." The dancers wiped their temples and fell into a row at either side, as we proceeded to the ruin. The ball-room was lighted up by sun beams which struggled through the ivy foliage that clung to the mullions of an oriel window ; it was already tenanted by hoary Elders, the priest and Kitty's aged people, appointed to receive us ; but the most imposing personage of the assembly was a stately blind old man, exalted on a rustic throne which Marion had canopied with laurel

and arbutus. His extinguished orbs were fixed in an unavailing gaze, yet his expression was resigned; he clasped his silent pipes with a mild and satisfied devotion, the furrows of his ample forehead softened by a patient smile. Johnny was a faithful illustration of the Irish troubadour of olden time; a stringless harp, the emblem of his former state and calling, was borne by the guide who led the old man through his darksome pilgrimages; his long striped *truisse*\* the work of Grace McQuillan, displayed the bardic colors, and even his time-worn *cotamor*† was fancifully patched, and fell from his shoulders beneath the masses of his silver hair with something of classic negligence. The harpist, 'tis true, had sunk into the piper, but such a piper!—The wind that filled his tubes was fairy wind; it could “*shake the barley*,” yea and the rough stubble; never debased into a drone, nor suffered to indite the vulgar jig, it was consecrated to the sweet and the pathetic; it resembled

“The stealing

Of summer wind through some wreathed shell,”

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\* Long stocking. † Cloak.

and, like the entrancing odes of Ireland's immortal bard, the most untutored intellect acknowledged its enchantment.

The signal of our entrance drew forth a martial salutation into which a few melancholy notes, as if unconsciously, intruded. The minstrel, kindling and elated, after a brilliant prelude, dashed into *the battle of Clontarf*, and then by a series of complicated modulations in which the musical proportions were skilfully preserved, sank into a plaintive melody, and made every heart respond to *Cruachan na Feene*. The applause of the Baroness gratified the proud old man more than her tribute to his poverty—but 'Lodbrog's death-song,' solicited by Marion, was cut off untimely, for Conlan, jealous of his aged rival, compressed his bag maliciously and struck up *Peas upon a trencher*.

"'Tis too bad," said Marion; "Conlan has had the profits of the day and might as well have left the glory of it to poor old Johnny—he had best beware of *Morgan Rattler*!"

But the brisk notes lavishly poured forth by the transgressor overpowered censure; his abrupt transitions left no opening for remon-



strance; *the trencher* glided into *Tade you gander*; Tade without præludium was changed into *Moll Roe*; even Johnny's venerable head kept time to *Danty Davy*, and every tuneful noddle in the room, (Berga's fast as any,) wagged furiously to *Bob and Joan*.

At last my aunt, declaring that her ears ached, arose to go, but the bridegroom begged the young Misthisses and Master Walter might see *his* Kitty foot *the Foxhunter*.—The Baroness gaily requested to be included with the young ones; my aunt and uncle left the room, and the national dance recommenced with all the national spirit and expression. In every breathing pause the out-door cheers gave note of fresh arrivals, but none save the *elite* were suffered to intrude upon *the quality*. Slauveen was Kitty's partner; he danced with hat in hand, and the inimitable grimace with which he bowed to little Berga as he passed her in his mazy evolutions, kept the lookers on in a continual giggle.—Laugh outright, they durst not *for all Cork*, while her Baronship remained.

I was standing near the antique fire-place

gazing at an angel's head which was peeping from the rubbish piled within the chimney-gorge, and thinking less of the present scene than of the comments which my version of *Antigone* had called forth. A tumult on the causeway, with reiterated cheers, made me turn to Helen and suggest the fitness of our removing the constraint which our presence imposed upon the merry-makers. My sisters instantly arose, but Madame Wallenberg's attention was rivetted; our repeated hints were unattended to—"Walter what is it?" she exclaimed abruptly.

The crowd of *curiosi* blocking up the entrance had given way to admit a singular procession—"What is it?" she repeated, in a tone of consternation—"what is it, Walter?"

I looked—it was—good gracious it was Quinilla!

## CHAPTER XII.

“ They come unbidden,  
Like foes at a wedding,  
Thrusting their faces  
In better guests' places.”

IT *was* Quinilla—it was her scarlet habit fresh as ever—her quizzing glass new set—her yellow boots new fronted—her head arrayed in spangled gauze and gum-flowers—she never looked so splendid!

I shook from head to foot; my deluding visions fled.—She had not, then, bestowed herself on either painter—perhaps she had; for one of them, (the plain one,) was behind her, with some nondescript creation, half monkey

and half man. But my cousin was already at my elbow ; she had hugged my sisters, pinched my arm caressingly, and clutched the aristocratic hand of the astonished Baroness.

“ And how do you do ? and how is every one of you and every bit of you ?—Did you think I had gone off ?—I wanted to astonish you !—We arrived about an hour ago, and put Laura into such a fluster ! she told me where you were and all about the Baroness ; so I *settled myself* and off I came—My habit is rather hot ; I only changed my hat, but *Madam Wallenberg* knows what it is to be without one’s *fam de shamber*. Mrs. Bullock has hired such a clever girl, brought up by *Mosheer* I-forget-his-name in Paris—Theodore says Monimia Bullock’s head is quite as good as any head in *Mosheer’s* shop. But patience ! how absurd I am—come hither, *The* :—let me present you to the Baroness—This is my brother, Theodore O’Toole, Esquire, just returned from abroad, my lady—your ladyship will excuse his travelling trim—*The* : is so accustomed to a lacquey.—And this is Mr. Fielding, a pictorial friend of mine—and—ah !—where’s Sandford ?—not

far off I dare say—I'm sadly quizzed about him Helen."—she tittered and affected to conceal a blush—"Law Baroness! can you endure the riff-raff of this place?—the country is a horrid bore to one accustomed to a *certain* set. How did you leave the Baron?—well I hope."

Madame Wallenberg bent to this address with frigid stateliness; she had hastily disengaged her hand from Quinny's clutch, but the name of O'Toole had satisfied her that our cousin was not some errant and bewildered maid. She took my arm, and slightly acknowledging the solemn reverence of Theodore, which caused the little tails of his coateen to culminate, she turned to the festive group, now still as blocks, and gaping at the unwelcome apparition. This movement led our cousin's eyes to her Patricius—back she recoiled, grimly viewing her resuscitated feather. The Esquire had in his mortal panic abruptly halted, mounted his gallant hat, ordered arms, and stood *not* at ease, not even able to equivocate a welcome. His brain seemed emptied of resources; he made no effort to slip off,

nor even to slip off the treacherous belt, which now, right faithfully, adhered unto his tunic. It was a subject for a painter—Quin electrified—Slauveen dumb-founded.—The transition to dead silence was appalling—pipes, prating gossips, peeping children, all were dumb—the weird maiden had transfixed us !

But the most wonder-stricken of the party was, beyond question, the *Fräulein* ; her eyes were positively widening from amazement ; Quinilla was their mark, nor in all the shiftings of the scene did she remove them, for one second, from our cousin. The bride recovered first, and acted bravely to avert the falling thunderbolt. With a demurely roguish look she marched up to the male O'Toole and curtsied, begging his honor would *make bold* to stand the ground with her. This unlooked for venture led our regards to the person thus addressed. The outline of a gaunt baboon might have stood for his profile—high maxillary bone, ridged with sandy whiskers ; very little forehead, very little prominence of nose, except at the extremity, and that was lavishly spread out on lemon-colored cheeks ; but the



flatness and deficiency of upper feature were compensated by a solid mass of chin, and an abundancy of mouth, which protruded lovingly, and extended almost to a pair of monstrous ears that stood aloof from his head, as if shrinking from his organs of destructiveness. A stupid grin overspread the heavy countenance at Kitty's invitation; he eyed his doe-skin dittos and topped boots, stroked his bottle-green lapels, and stuck his hands into his waistcoat pockets; "Dance! what nonsense that is now! Fielding have you got a pair o' gloves in your pocket?"

"Dance here!" ejaculated Quinilla; "why Theodore O'Toole I'm horrified!—are you beside yourself dear *The* :?"—She beat him tenderly, and turned to the Baroness—"The fashionable dances now, my lady, are French cotillions and the *Heeland* fling—if you could only see Monimia Bullock shuffle!—she learned of *Fontaine*—a feathered Mercury as some one says—though Dionysius Bullock sticks to the old country dance.—Think of me leading off four and twenty couple at his fancy ball! I was Virginia; Theodore was Paul; my partner was

a Mr. Sanford, an artist of some eminence ; he was in a domino ; the tune was Money Musk !”

“ No, twas ‘the Dusty miller’ I assure you,” put in *The*:—“ I and *Moneemia* turned every couple to the very bottom.—Don’t you remember our dancing hands all round without taking any hands at all?—that was my idea—I never was so hot in all my life.”

While these *illuminati* thus displayed their deep research, Fielding had ensconced himself between the abutments of the window, and seemed impressing on his *pictorial* fancy the thousand shadings of the landscape, from which the sun was just departing. Compared with Sanford I had thought him as unfavored as myself.—Compared with Theodore O’Toole, Esquire, I thought him fit subject for Apelles. The maudlin, low-browed face of the O’Toole was a fine set off to Fielding’s elevated front, and grand contemplative expression. I considered the young artist with singular content, from the relief which he afforded to this meagre type of rationality. He caught my eye and nodded : I would have given him a warmer greeting, but I dared not quit the Baroness, a

feature in whose character, hitherto masked, had been suddenly revealed. From the courteous gentlewoman, urbane and gracious, she was at once transformed into the lofty magnate. Not all our cousin's blandishments could impress the frostwork of her tranquil haughtiness, or win her even to amenity. The countenance fraught with sympathy for the old blind beggar, now wore a character of stern reserve ; and the stateliness natural to this high-bred woman, put off to meet with polished tolerance or friendly pleasantry my aunt's blunt honesty, was instantly resumed to awe Quinilla's coarse familiarity. But Quinilla had, in her *own right*, too much self-importance to be easily repelled ; she beset the Baroness with the softest eloquence, exerted all her novel power of entertainment, described her coterie, the leaders of the Cork *haut ton*, with graphical precision, dexterously quoting as umpires of the Munster Areopagus, Dionysius Bullock and Theodore O'Toole ; the latter of whom she trippingly affirmed had lately returned from making *a grand tower*. In this shew off our cousin did not mean to perpetrate a bounce ; the *tour* of

London was in her geography the grand one.

Meantime our roguish bride was quite as earnestly besieging Theodore, importunate from sheer love of mischief. The embarrassed beauty wriggled from side to side, while his tormentor encouraged him not to look so shame-faced.—The step would come quite natural, like March in Lent—to be sure his legs looked rather stubborn, but Conlan's pipes would take the stiffness out of um.

"Stiffness!" exchoed *The*: eyeing his calves with anxious tenderness—"the girl is blind! be off good ooman—don't bother me I tell you—'tis a shame to *tase* a man that way, by all our *ancesthurs* 'tis too *unrasonable*."

"So it is by mine," exclaimed a voice, "to let a pretty woman stand *that way*—Take *me* my lass; I'm dying for a dance, and parted galligaskins for the purpose.—Strike up my honest piper."

Not even the presence of "the quality" could repress a whooping of applause for the new comer, which glided into a hollow groan for the buckeen. The next moment Sanford and

the bride were *polishing the flure*, in emulation of each other, the lookers on protesting the young man's legs were just as limber as "the unburied legs" that ran one Sunday morning four *hunder* miles without a halt.

Quinilla's battery was now confined to eye-beams and these being directed at the agile youth, we had time to think of a retreat, which Madame Wallenberg at once commenced—Helen ventured to remind her of Quinilla, but the Baroness coolly remarked that her good friend's tea hour was already passed.

Our exit was unnoticed, Sanford had eclipsed us all; even crutch-sticks and wooden legs were showering acclamation. Rueful cogitations attended our return.

"I thought you'd never come!" exclaimed my aunt, who was briskly walking round and round the tea table—"Where's Quinilla?—I was so sorry—I mean to say I was so glad to see her back again—Theodore is grown a fine young man—don't you think so, Madam Wallenberg?"

Heedless of reply, she looked at Helen with the most intensely wo-begone expression—

“What am I to do with them?” she whispered—“What on earth *am* I to do with them!”

The Baroness was unused to such emergencies as those which plagued her hostess, and had quite forgotten the strait we had been driven into by Berga’s unlooked for introduction. Thus while poor aunt was pitched by turns to either horn of a dilemma, her guest sat quietly confabulating the day’s events with Marion.

But I had been conning this double difficulty during our homeward walk, and now proposed resigning my apartment to Quinilla, and occupying the oak chamber of the ruin with the male O’Toole. Rush squabs and matting, with a coverlid or two, would furnish couches: “and,” added Helen, “the weather is so fine there is no danger, aunt, of Walter’s taking cold.”

This last remark established sunshine. My aunt had now no drawback on her joy; she ranged her cups with blithe alacrity, interspersing her eulogies of Theodore with tintinnabulary appeals to Katy for more spoons and plates, and an occasional admonition to keep the *kettle* boiled for Miss Quinilla and the



company. A quavering cachinnation with the deep bass of Theodore's horse-laugh accompaniment wafted through the window, made me gulp down my tea at considerable risk, and withdraw to the remotest corner—I would have absconded, but the Baroness alone had time to escape, before the passage was filled up by our cousin and suite.

“Come in, come in, Mr. Sanford; you must; upon my honor you must—I'm very despotic—a downright Desdemona!—Come in can't you—Law! don't look so bashful; *I'll* introduce you to the Baroness.—*The*: make the creature shew himself.” *The*: entered lugging in “the creature.” My aunt saluted the group with a volley of welcomes, poured out tea, and recommended her slim cake.

“Well sister,” said Quinilla, “*I'm* not in love with your fine lady I can tell you—she looks like any thing but a woman of rank—struck of a heap when Theodore bowed—totally unused to people of fashion—no language—no address—stiff as a poker—well-bred people are never at a loss—shut up in some tramontane castle from the hour she was born,

depend upon it: I declare to you I pitied her uncommonly.”

This judgment, which staggered all my poor aunt's preconceived opinions of her guest, caused such an unaffected stare, and such a halt in the tea-cup then journeying to her lips, that Sanford sprang forward to rescue the trembling china.

“I never saw more ungenteel behaviour in my life!” resumed Quinilla, “nor a worse dressed figure—quite preposterous!—*she* a woman of fashion!—fudge!—Trains are out, and gowns of all sorts—old as the North star! *The*: will tell you *that*—no such things *in being* when he was abroad.”

My aunt's stare grew more intensely stultified.—“Do you mean that the Baroness should go *without* a gown Quinilla?”

“Gowns!” cried *The*: “who the plague would wear a gown! jackets and petticoats are all the go.”

“Brother are you wild?—would you have a woman of sixty ferked out in a jacket like a show-girl?”

“The most becoming dress was ever worn!”

said Quinilla—Mr. Sanford vowed I never looked so well in all my life as at the fancy ball—I was quite in character—Virginia wore a jacket—no one could tell me whether her petticoat was flounced, so Mortimer McCarthy bade me finish mine with four rows of puckered scolloping and a heading edged with bugles, to imitate the pearl shells of that blackamoor Island she was born in—’Twas *Shuperb* !”

“The petticoat could not be amiss,” observed my aunt, “but jackets are only fit for boys, or babes like Marion there.”

Quinilla reddened—“I assure you, sister, Mr. Sanford said—tell Laurentia what you said—didn’t you protest I”—

“Never looked more lovely !” added Sanford, with a countenance so animated and a gesture so emphatic that my heart bounded with delight.—Quinilla, to all intents and purposes, had captivated the handsome painter !—How I revived at this conviction !—I left my corner to address the welcome guest, who, without disarranging any one, had wedged himself between my sisters, and was then receiving Marion’s

lively thanks for his good nature to her favorite Kitty.

Among all the varieties of character which crossed my worldly path I never met an individual so gracefully impertinent as Sanford. He could overstep the line of gentle breeding and make his trespass pass for a refinement. There was a nameless charm in his negligence which seduced the most fastidious. The goddess of decorum might have mistaken him for one of her discreetest votaries at the moment he most impudently infringed her decalogue. My admiration of his confidence was in proportion to my own deficiency in this serviceable attribute.

Quinilla now opened her budget of city news, and detailed her adventures at Mr. McCarthy's drum, where the first people in Cork had been assembled to celebrate the birth-day of the McCarthy heiress. "Such a *scroodge*!—The supper was *shuperb*—fowls, scollops, pickled salmon, sweets of all sorts, catches and glees, cold punch, a garnishing of colored comfits, two fiddles and a dulcimer!—The rooms were lit

with real wax—Mrs. Mahony hinted they were mock, but—”

“And so they were I’m positive!” blustered O’Toole, “*Moneemia* told me, too, half the *cheers and teebles* were her mothers. That heir-ess you cry up so, looked for all the world like a Friesland hen! she wears her hair like you,” addressing Helen—“but then she’s not so *poorty*, and her tail is foxy.”

“Sir!” ejaculated Helen, with a look of profound astonishment.

“’Tis true as you are there—quite foxy!—I advised her to mount peg-heels. She’s very squat; now you,” he added, surveying Marion, “you would look all the better for peg-heels; stand up.”

“Pardon, my exalted friend!” cried Sanford, gently repelling the clumsy fist extended to enforce his order; “one word of explanation—What do you mean by Friesland hen, peg-heels, and foxy?”

“Did you never see carroty hair and heel-taps!” cried O’Toole, glaring raw astonishment—“Well, you’re a wiseacre!”

"You flatter me," said Sanford; "I concede the title to yourself; will you interpret Friesland hen?"

"Friesland hen—don't you know what that is?—a Friesland hen is—why 'tis an owl in an ivy bush to be sure, or something o' that sort—something all frowzed and hornified like Miss Casy at the play when the bleeding nun comes in."

"I wish Katy would bring candles and take away the tea things," said my aunt.

"Beauty loves the shade," exclaimed Quinilla, "where in the name of wonder has that creature Fielding hid himself?"

"I never thought of him," replied my aunt; "the tea is cold."

"Sanford wo'n't let me touch my *poorty* cousin, sister," grumbled Theodore; "I want to measure her.—The other is the beauty though; the very height a girl ought to be."

I could have kicked him!

"Brother you must not flatter these poor



children," said my aunt; "they may believe you."

"Would you down-face us they are not *poorty* would you!—that's capital!—children indeed!—I like a joke!—wouldn't you call my cousins *poorty* girls Sanford?"

"Your tenses, like your metaphors confound me," replied Sanford. "Forgive my ignorance; what I *would* say is regulated by what I *should*."

"Well," cried Quinilla, "you have the prettiest way of saying a soft thing Mr. Sanford!—not always so backward in compliments for all that!—Do you remember what you said to me at the Bullock fancy-ball?"

"Is it possible I could forget!" said the young man impressively.

My indignation at the O'Toole impertinence was softened by this added proof of Sanford's devotion to our cousin.

"Walter," whispered Helen, "my aunt will explain our arrangements to her brother; Madame Wallenberg is alone."

The entrance of Mrs. Mulligan with lights, pursued by pug, who scampered to Quinilla, yelping his rapture, made our exit feasible.—Helen sought the Baroness; I strolled towards the ruin.

## CHAPTER XIII.

“ What scared St. Anthony ?  
Fierce Anthropophagi,  
Spectra, Diabole,  
Night-riding Incubi,  
Troubling the phantasie,  
All dire illusion  
Causing confusion.”

WHAT is so beautiful as night—a moonlight night—and mountain scenery ; and silence to enjoy them. Solitude and starry night allay the feverish throb of discontent and harmonize discordant feelings. Coarse laughter, silly prate, Quinilla and Quinilla's brother were forgotten.

Of the bridal revelry scarce a trace remained. An hour had changed the aspect of the scene, as though an age had passed. The bay which had reflected flying skiff and sail, and dancing group, life's merry panorama, now gave back images of sombre stillness ; the rocks gigantic shadows, the moveless branches of the trees, and the cleft walls of the ruin looking ghastly in the moonlight. The only vestige of the late festivity was the piper's tribune, (Katy's salting tub,) deserted near the portal. I passed it, moralizing on its mutations since the dawn—reversed—right-sided—a pickle-cask—a throne.

“That's Master Walter's lazy leg I'd take my davy,” sighed a voice. A head was raised above the tub-rim, so wan ! it could not be our gallant generalissimo—“'Tis not Slauveen ?” I cried.

“Haith ! but it is though ; 'tis Slauveen himself crammed into a pickle-keg like corned crubeens, sir—the life is downright dead inside of us !—no wonder !—didn't she break out on us just like a rebellion ? Think of this morning Master Walter, think of it ; just as we got upon the skirts o' joy !—an' now !”

Even *I* was confounded at the grief-created pause.—This new Diogenes, (from his stoic prototype degenerate,) actually wept.

“To bring back herself was bad enough,” resumed Slauveen, “but to bring us her double too! as ugly a baste as ever our good looking eye was frightened by.”

“Be more respectful Slauveen, you speak of your mistress’s brother.”

“The more shame for him to be lookin’ so horrid unnatural then!—I must take to my old misthiss now, Miss Quinny O’Toole! bother her!—How *furious* she stared at the feather!—wasn’t her countenance red as a radish!—an’ I like a rap\* in a poor-box, so ’shamed o’ *meeself*!—to be cowed by a woman before all our people!—translated to stone with my tongue in my throath! ’twill choke us!—*You’re* as down at the mouth as dumb Dicky Donovan, Sir.”

“But why are you lodged in that tub?”

“I can always think best in the dark, Sir—I didn’t pop in to shirk Miss Quinilla at any

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\* Rap.—A bad half-penny.

rate—Pooh! we don't care a whistle for her—there's worse luck than that—her Baronship's going!”

“Going!”

“’Tisn't likely the face o' Miss Quin would entice her to stay.—The blessin' o' the blind, an' the lame, an' the starvin', and sick, be her shield from bad luck!”

“Do you mean that she leaves us to-morrow?”

“I'm off for the carriage at day-break. The Geraldine gave me my orders, an' a message for you, Sir, wrapped up in this scrap of a note—’tis a merry come sorrow—but there must be a blister for every back.”

I made a brave struggle to keep down my grief.

“An' what will become o' my mother without her *Frowleen*? we'd hang ourselves but for the sin of it—Good night Sir—I must pack up her boxes. But where will the Misthiss stow the Squireen, Sir?”

I explained, commending to Katy the care of our visitor's bedding.

“I'll bring him a blanket myself, and a bit



of a glass to be viewing his beautiful phiz," cried Slauveen, with alacrity—we'll give him a lift in any man's house but the master's."

I turned from him into the ruin, and Slauveen pursued his way, disturbing the night with '*Dholinshin cruskeen lawn.*' I stretched myself upon a mat beneath the minstrel's canopy, and was asleep before the song had ceased.

The compounds of my dreams were wedding pranks and city routs.—I, who had never danced before, capered like one bewitched at the McCarthy drum with the McCarthy heirless, while two fiddles and a dulcimer, Conlan and blind Johnny, struck up a horrid *mélée* of discordant tunes, through which *the dusty miller* was predominant. The mutations of my partner were miraculous; she changed into a Friesland hen, and then into a monstrous owl, *I* still performing my coranto, while the waddling biped whisked round and round, pursuing me with ardour, and the male O'Toole, dressed in a jacket and petticoat, clapped with all his might—*Moneemia* in a dock-tailed coat and crowned with a smart cockade, assailed me next. Wondering at my 'light, fantastic toe' I shuff-

led and cut with all the ease in life, while transformation went on rapidly—My partner was now a horned bullock careering on his hinder legs, and now a lion with a fiery tail lashing the floor outrageously.

At length ‘the spirit of my dream was changed’; my limping gait returned; I was shrivelled to a Leprechan and corked up in a bottle of punch.

The clam of consternation bedewed my brow when I awoke.—where was I?—The dazzling glare from ‘*real wax candles*’ faded into a dim uncertain light—I raised myself upon my elbows—my unblinking gaze took in a monster, a substantial monster, hideous as my unreal tormentors—it was Theodore O Toole in a dirty night cap and a comfortable doze, enveloped in blankets and delicately bolstered. The glimmering dawn was still less lenient to his charms than gairish sun-light; the whole fairy tribe could have sported in his cavern of a mouth or played bo-peep in the dilated tunnels of a proboscis which gave premonitory note that its owner might be tickled by the goblins

with impunity. I cautiously arose, and perceived Fielding, wrapped in his cloak, pillowed by a mat, stretched near the window, and profoundly sleeping; his vallisè, with scattered books and papers, lay beside him—"Did nature employ the same journeyman to form this man and that?" thought I.

The encreasing light made my "scrap of a note" now legible. It contained but a line—"You will meet the Baroness at Grace Mc Quillan's cottage before breakfast." I hastily descended to the lake and braced myself for the uphill ramble by a genial dip.

Theodore might have found in the pellucid waters a more faithful mirror than that with which Katy had provided him: the hue and shape of shell and pebble were distinguishable, and the pendulous spikelets of the cotton grass which fringed the little isthmus seemed bathing, like myself, in crystal depths: vapours were steaming from the fissures, but the Eastern sky was clear and tinted with vermillion. I had crossed the causeway just as a horizontal ray from the newly risen sun, fell like a fillet of

gold upon the monarch mountain of our glen, irradiating the summit. An eagle wheeled silently round and round the peak, as if rejoicing in the glory poured upon his dwelling-place; while a venerable goat, perched upon a nether ledge, seemed observant as myself of these devotional gyrations. Gradually the inspiriting beams slanted to the headland, lighting up lake and tree, and bronzing the time-blackened arches of the ruin. Our quiet little homestead, shadowed by its hill ramparts, was but partially fleckered when I rounded the gap. The universal silence would have led me to think that the inmates were still sleeping off the yester eve's frolic, but that my sister's window was open, and a vapour, struggling through the cone which adorned our chimney, evinced that Katy was coaxing her embers. A few of the senseless stragglers of the previous morn now drowsily stalked from the byre. Till then I had bravely kept down the "merry come sorrow," but the sight of the duck pond opened the sluices of grief—how many, many days must intervene before Lanty could perpetrate such

another immersion, before our cousin again should depart for the Bullocks—"May Sanford fall deeper and deeper in love!"—The cock's shrill trumpet cut short my invocation.

I took a circuitous bridle-path which led to the sheeling, summing up Quinny's attractions—There was certainly something uncommon about her—so said my aunt. If *my* taste was not suited to this kind of "uncommon," why my taste must be false. She was fluent we knew, and *tip-top* by suffrage of all the *first* people in Cork. She had a wonderful knack at adornment Katy declared; and could vary the same piece of fustian into cardinal, joseph, or jacket and petticoat : to the wife of an artist this gift was a fortune, a ware-room in which he might choose picture-costumes.

The fall of a hoof, cautious and sure, dis-severed the links of Quinilla's perfections. The path was narrow, so I sat down on a crag, and prudently drew up my legs, conscious that the tramp belonged to gruff Lanty Maw. Lanty's long head soon appeared, warily no-

ting the steep sinuosities : his rider was trolling, *ad libitum*, a song he had parodied :—

Sure one woman's tongue,  
Like a sheep-skin well strung,  
Might draw a whole nation  
together, together !

No drum ever sounded  
A peal so confounded,  
As rolls from a two-legged  
belwether, belwether !

He espied me and halted—" 'Tis a pass with a vengeance, an' a pretty pass to, you are come to, you garron, to be leavin' your betters make way for you !—are you takin' the wall of young Geraldine, Lanty !" He dismounted.—" A cool day to you sir, an' a quiet one—there's some things more likely than that though."

" Not yet on your journey Slauveen !"

" Could I go without wishin' *her* well through the desolate sea ?" he replied, applying the back of his hand to his eyes—" a quiet-grained loving *Frowleen*. What a villain I was to make game of her !"

" Is Berga sorry to leave us ?"



“Cryin’ her stiff little eyes out! they’ll never be fixed upon me any more; I’m bothered betwixt her and her Baronship”—Slauveen raised his hat, a ceremony he always observed when he named Madame Wallenberg. “My heart howls like a death-bell; wisha then if it was howlin’ for cross-grained Miss Quin! a buryin’ her or marryin’ her, ’tis all one to Slauveen.”—He went on soliloquizing and guiding his steed through the pass—“But for Maw and my mother, my master an’ misthiss, Miss Marion, Katy Mulligan, the lads, an’ Miss Helen, I’d be off with her Baronship so I would.”—The lament was drowned in the drone of a bee.

My cloudy and lively forecastings struggled awhile, but the melancholy ones had the mastery. I resumed the path, vainly endeavouring to lure back Quinilla’s merits; the whole train had decamped, and I mounted the upland, moodful of departed quiet and departing friends. The merry song of the rivulet, issuing from the hill-tarn and briskly accompanying my lagging steps, sounded a comment on my

tardiness. I hastened forward and soon beheld the bonny witch of Carrig-a-Phooka, standing at her hospitable wicket, and issuing her welcomes far above the voice of the waterfall. The sheeling wore its usual inviting aspect—The sun-rays fell lovingly upon a breakfast that might have sated the ravenous Apicius—cream, meal-porridge, platters of eggs and honey, sugar in *chany* basin, and coffee in a pipkin for her Baronship, and piles of buttered oat-cake, that well nigh served for pillars to the rafters. On one of these luscious columns were fixed the eyes of the *Fräulein*, as if lamenting its approaches to consumption, while Granny's looks, now bright, now watery, were roving into every nook, in search of something to arrange. The fire blaze was blinking in the polished kettle-lid, still 'twould look *the better for a rub*—there were creases to be smoothed in the table-cloth—the hearth was swept so often that puss, for vengeance, clawed the brush which so disturbed her latitude—the only seat that had a back was placed where its occupant might enjoy the scenery; a mug

of wild flowers was transported from the dresser to the window ledge.

Berga, meanwhile, sat moveless as the rock, after the first grand effort she had made to bid *Herr Walter* a *gut morgen*. I had read of some gymnosophists who hoped to win beatitude by a life-long changeless stare. It now occurred to me that Berga had vowed some such penitentiary atonement to her martyred Patagonian. There was to-day, however, a purple tinge around the lids and a liquid glitter in the orbs themselves, not customary—something like a child's tear that stole into the heart, more impressive than the wildest sob. It deprived me of my relish for the dainties I had yearned towards, though Grace, through all her housewifely anxieties, energetically exhorted me to swallow, just a mouthful, to keep the appetite alive.

My uncle and the Baroness entered as the finishing rub was given to the kettle-lid. Berga made a reverential stand, but never moved her eyes from the oat-cake obelisk. Grace was in an agony of grief and hospitality ;

lamenting the approaching separation, and helping Madame Wallenberg to as much food as would have surfeited two stalworth retainers of her noble house ; then, mindful of her *distance*, she retired to the inner room with the *Fräulein*. My uncle had breakfasted, or else was ill-disposed to honor Grace's viands ; he was too abstracted to control the craving instinct which led him to a book ; in a moment he was installed with Bunyan on the settle, and puss upon his shoulder amicably purring. The Baroness informed me she had left her worthy hostess thus early, to prevent the intrusion of *those people* upon the most painful adieus she had ever made—"One alone excepted," she added, sighing deeply—"This life's travelling gauze will sometimes blow aside Walter, notwithstanding our efforts to make light of the irremediable ; but remember I have a journey to perform—we must not disappoint our lavish entertainer."

The edge of my appetite was blunted. I pictured our to-morrow—Quinilla filling the Baroness's chair—the brother Teole and all his

ancestors—a second series of city chronicles—a second night of dansomania. The shapings of my fancy were revolting—for consummate breeding and courtly elegance, consummate rudeness and dull clack!—for the soul-elevating notice of such a woman as Madame Wallenberg, taunts, sneers, and nervous headaches! I made a mighty effort to philosophize, to eat without being choked: lest my tears should be detected, I stammered something of apology, and followed Grace and the *Fräulein*.—Here I had companions to countenance my grief—Berga's noiseless sorrow was the most expressive; faithful to her text, she had fixed upon a gazing-mark, the hook that sustained a choke-full cauldron, in which simmered a regale prepared for the aged of the glen by order of the Baroness. Grace had flung one arm round Berga's waist, and, from sympathy perhaps, was gazing in the same direction through a shower of tears. The *Fräulein* regarded me not, neither seemed she conscious of my presence, for in a mixed language, she entreated her *lieber guten freund* to

keep shut-lip upon the *sorrow-tale* she had related, for no *gut* thing would come of telling it. Grace's warranty for silence was given in her own sweet vernacular, attested by a hearty hug. Berga responded with a gentler pressure, and a *fahre-hin*\* pathetically reiterated, while Granny soothed and sobbed, bemoaning the scores of happy cosherings she and her *cushla-gra*, her little foreign fairy, had enjoyed together.

A beckon from Madame Wallenberg drew me from these unsophisticated friends. The Baroness was alone; my uncle had transferred himself to the witch's tribune outside the hut; the low parapet which hedged in the little tenement serving for a reading desk.

"I was anxious for this opportunity of speaking to you," said Madame Wallenberg, almost in a whisper—She looked at me fixedly—"You and your sisters, Walter, recall to me the forms of happy years, shadows of a solemn phantom-land, those I most loved and those

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\* *Fahre-hin*.—Farewell.



I most—"—She stopped abruptly, and after a pause resumed—" I must banish harsh feeling from this last interview."

" Last interview !" I repeated.

" Even so Walter ; the tenser nerves snap soonest. Let me however speak to my purpose. You have a right to my protection ; you have a right to claim it ; therefore when I tell you that I am ready to satisfy on the instant any lurking inclination you may feel to enter a more ambitious course, I only promise that to which you are entitled.—You must not interrupt me—Is there any profession to which your wishes point ? There are seminaries in your native country or in Germany to qualify students of your age for high distinction. Answer me without reserve—Are you desirous of emerging from obscurity ?—would you leave your mountain home ?"

I stood aghast ; all the collective horrors of display upon a noisy and contentious theatre, of entering a literary curriculum, of vieing with the graceful and distinguished, crowded to my brain.—I—halting—trembling—leave my

mountain glen! mine own dear home! the loves and friendships of my boyhood!—Conception rose quicker than utterance—I was in the porch, in the academy—I was exalted in the Forum, and “conscript fathers” on my tongue. But my tongue had cleaved unto my palate; I felt as many pangs as I had figured subjects of unconquerable repugnance and regret. Madame Wallenberg’s suggestion wore the form of advice—dared I dissent?—If my face was my mind’s index it must have looked a doleful face!

The Baroness smiled. “You will climb but by one path Walter; thorny, steep, and rocky, but still a *’witching* path; you will abide with your cordial, joyous people. Do not look so heart-stricken—I proffered my assistance not my counsel.”

“You are not then offended,” stammered I.

“We are seldom offended by the dumb,” she replied—“It is not *your* fault that your countenance is honest. I neither applaud nor condemn your resolve; I dare not. One mighty

error has lowered my self-reliance. Governed by weak compassion I once cancelled an interdict which I considered harsh, shutting my eyes to consequences multiplied as if in warning, and appalingly invariable. The rebuke was awful!—Ought I to interfere a second time?”

This speech was uttered rapidly; the conclusion seemed to appeal to her own judgment rather than to mine; therefore I did not feel called on to reply.

After a pause the Baroness resumed—“Those who have erred as I have done should doubt their capability of judging rightly. With your character, with companions so unworldly, so enthusiastic in nature’s imagery, a fancy-sketch of public life must be revolting—I was prepared for your decision—There are circumstances too, which incline the balance in its favor, and yet—and yet you are too young perhaps to pronounce at once upon your future course—Your uncle’s resources may be ample, or they may be proportioned only to his actual position.—Are you aware that he once ranked high as

Baron Wallenberg? his retirement is as much of choice as of necessity, I do believe, because he says so, and his word is questionless; but one cannot discuss pecuniary affairs with such a man; therefore I address myself to you. I would not wound your best affections, but I would suggest that the opinions cherished at seventeen may be condemned at seven and twenty; even these mountains may change to prison-walls if found to be life's boundary—That flush denies the imputation, and asserts your devotion to your early benefactors; but mine is the age of disenchantment Walter; like you I once thought I never should repent of acting upon impulses I considered meritorious; had I pondered on those impulses the sterner sentiment of justice would have detected selfishness veiled by generosity.”

I struggled to give my thoughts utterance, but a stubborn impediment obstructed their deliverance; I could only falter, “You mistake; I do not pretend to generosity—I do not pretend that it is gratitude to friends which dictates my decision—none but the kind and the

indulgent could care any thing for *me* ;—the world has no friends for the timorous and deformed.”

“Many a gentle mind dwells in deformed tabernacle,” said Madame Wallenberg—such as you are, I would present you as my son without a blush ; but remember I do not urge you to this world from which you are at present so averse—I would only provide for a change in your opinions—Should such a change take place and Madame Wallenberg be dead, apply to Baron Derentsi—my son is honorable and high minded—Take this medallion ; Derentsi will perceive how much his mother valued you, when she made you the depositary of a memorial so beloved. Your sisters need not know the subject of our conference ; recollect that he who would preserve a secret should not discover that he possesses one.”—She put the medallion into my hand, and turning from me hastily summoned Berga and my uncle—I was not prepared for her abrupt—“farewell, farewell !”

My heart was swelling with a host of sad adieus.—The trio were slowly and separately

winding down the little footpath, and still articulation was impeded ; I could only wave my hand, while Grace, who stood beside me on the threshold gazing after Berga and her mistress, sobbingly ejaculated—"May you never hide yourself but where the houseless and the fatherless may find you !"



## CHAPTER XIV.

“ While as I ruminate  
On my untoward fate,  
Scarcely seem I  
Alone sufficiently,  
Black thoughts continually  
Crowding my privacy.”

I returned to the ruin to pore over my tribulations. The sombre walls were suited to my tone of mind, and the cawing of the rooks trencched less upon my reveries than the euphonious cackling of Quinilla. The old oak chamber was abandoned to ‘solitude and me’: I longed to become the exclusive tenant of its loneliness, to turn out my partner’s sleeping furniture, the couch on which his tender limbs had rested, his toilet-shelf of noxious lotions, and all his trumpery adornments. Even Fielding’s vallise

was an unwelcome earnest of its owner's proximity ; it augured a further encroachment upon my settlement, irksome to my present mood. I groped about for some unnoticeable corner, in which I might pine and mope to my content, and at length recollected that a closet behind the minstrel's throne was suitable for my purpose. Marion had hidden the dilapidated door with a canopy of laurel boughs and a faded curtain which had served for drapery. This inner chamber was some steps above the outer room, and might have been a cabinet or oratory. There were shelves and niches, once filled perhaps with folios and graven images. My entrance put to flight a flock of crows which had been comfortably roosting on the transverse bar of a loophole near the roof, for years appropriated by the sable brood, and black as their own polished coats. The ejected band kept up a long and lusty croak.— I felt stricken by a vague remorse at thus molesting their ancient dormitory—" Ye were attached to the deserted place," thought I ; " tenants by time's suffrage, and I have driven ye forth, to nestle beneath unfamiliar eaves."

My new lodgement, after a little labour, looked pleasanter than the oak chamber. I removed the lumber from the niches, and mounted on a window-seat to fling it into the bay. This brought about two notable discoveries; a bulwark of ivy clinging to the stone-shafted casement, grappling the old wall to its base and descendable as a ladder; and a crypt in the window-seat; the latter according to the Elizabethan fashion of architectural arrangement being hollow, with hinges to the lid. By the tough fibres of the ivy I could, riskless of neck or limb, alight upon a mole which ramparted the South side of the ruin, and thus decamp at my convenience, without disturbing the toilet-orgies of O'Toole. The window-seat would conceal my diary &c.

Inow drew forth the medallion and pressed my finger on a spring; it opened, and disclosed the portrait of a female.—For a moment I imagined that Marion must have been the artist's theme, but a dark transparent veil overhanging the brow gave a gloomy expression to the countenance which lessened the resemblance; still it was strong enough to bear out the conclusion

that the features were Julia Derentsi's, and it instantly occurred to me that the Baroness had chosen this indirect method of presenting me with my mother's picture. The finger of a master artist was discernible, one who had sketched in fancy ere he touched the ivory, the image of a maid foredoomed. A strange horror crept on me; I hastily shut the case, and to detach my thoughts from the portrait, I began to meditate on my recent interview with the Baroness.

But even when I had minuted our conversation in my note-book I saw no clearer through the mystery which had so long embarrassed me. Conjecture served at least to divert the grief which, even in its mitigated form, I dared not subject to Quinilla's ridicule. I looked around my rookery with the elation that Sancho might have felt when he surveyed the Isle of Barataria, intending to adopt it as my chamber of refuge until our cousin should bless young Sanford with herself, or should return to the Bullocks. From contrast with Madame Walenberg she was more intolerable than ever. The male annoyance was quite as insupportable,

and I reflected on the scarcity of cottage room with satisfaction, as it furnished an excuse for avoiding these duplicate tormentors.

It was not until I had made every possible arrangement for escaping nightly collision with O'Toole that I recollected the departure of Madame Wallenberg, which had put Quinilla in possession of her apartment at the cottage, would put me in possession of mine. This sequence, so stupidly overlooked, confounded me. I stared around my safety-valve with an obtuse sensation of regret. Heavy footsteps approached; I had barely presence of mind to replace the curtain when Theodore O'Toole Esquire, was heard apostrophizing his habiliments—"You're a nice pair of splatterdashes upon my conscience, so you are! after the sousing you got in that confounded pool—'tis well I wasn't drowned in it myself for good and all!—Couldn't those girls tell one the stones were slippery? My pantaloons dished into the bargain!—cost one pound ten without the buttons; and where the plague am I to get another pair?—Not a single *cheer* to hang um on!—Deuce a stay I'll stay if they don't put

me in a decent room—no, nor the deuce a bit o' me will for all the weddings in the world!—Here's a *poorty* den for a gentleman to dress in!"

Thus seeming to go through the process of his toilet he kept up a pathetic grumbling, while I, astraddle on the closet window-ledge, contemplated the venture of swinging downwards by the ivy. As I paused upon the matter, a boat, steered by Fielding approached the mole. Sanford and Quinilla were seated in the stern. To avoid espial I drew back; the party landed; Fielding entered the ruin, and the lovers strolled arm in arm along the mole. Thus was my escape through the window obstructed, and I was inconceivably averse from betraying my port of refuge by issuing through the curtain. There was no resource; I was compelled to overhear the sputterings of O'Toole, now however interrupted by the voice of Fielding, who made an exclamation and laughed.

"You'd laugh at the wrong side of your mouth I'll engage, if you flumped in cold water up to the knees of the best pair of trowsers you had," said O'Toole—"cost every stiver of



one pound ten shillings besides the new buttons!—If I put on my peach-colored shorts the least spot o' *grace* will bedevil um!"

"You have only ten minutes to make up your mind," said Fielding: "my toilet is soon completed: your sister requested we should not be late.

"And where *is* Quinilla?" growled Theodore—"She promised to change these Hottentot dinner hours—How crumpled your collar looks!—A vallise is the ruination o' coats!"

"Miss O'Toole is with Sanford; they wait for us."

"Sanford!—a shilly-shally shabroon!—How yellow a man looks in this glass!—'tis cracked in the middle—he sha'nt philander with my sister though—You're a bad hand at brushing a coat my good fellow!—why you'll ruin the nap—can he make a fit settlement?—if he dares to say no, by the blessing o' Moses I'll *mollify* him!"

"Do you believe that he means to marry your sister?"

"*Manes!* by all manner o' manes! I'll *mollify* his *manes* if he don't!—Marry her!—Just lend me the loan o' your clothes-brush—

Marry her!—what else does he *mane*? I'll philander him!—There's but one way of bowing to Irishmen's sisters—Marry her—I like that indeed!—cotton stockings destroy a man's legs;—*we'll* teach him to *lave* off bamboozling a girl o' quality."

"You had better make haste," observed Fielding.

"I will with a bludgeon o' black-thorn, and so you may tell him—where the plague is my knee-buckle?—make haste?—to be sure I'll make haste."

"I mean to your dinner," said Fielding.

"Just stop a moment; how is my hair? *will* you lend me a white pocket handkerchief."

They departed: I rejoiced that nothing had passed which might have compelled me to shew myself: they had made no allusion to me or to any one dear to me: as for Quinilla, she was provided I found, to my boundless astonishment, with a doughty defender. This twig of the valiant O'Tooles rose prodigiously high in my estimate; and to forward the consummation his interference with Sanford promised, I determined to remain in my present establish-

ment, and resign in his favor my room at the cottage.

Time had unconsciously flown ; it was dinner hour, but I was covered with cobweb and dust ; a flickering horror of our cousin and the *company* kept hunger at bay ; the family would conclude I had remained at the sheeling, and until Grace's supper hour I had plenty of work in arranging my rookery.

The curtain had been so disposed behind the throne, that no unscrutinizing visitor could suspect there was a room beyond it. I restored my sleeping mat to the oak chamber, and a little more exertion made me Lord of another library ; it only wanted books, and these I could procure while Quinilla was pursuing a quarry more important. It struck me that the actual moment was propitious—dinner would engage the cottage party—I could creep in at the study window, and abstract a tome or two without detection. This adventure was entered on without delay ; the study was attained with little difficulty ; there was no necessity for stealthy pace or tip-toe ; I could have marched away, unheard, with a troop of

*ancients*, the clang of tongues and laughter in the adjoining room was so predominant. I felt indignant—How could my sisters join in such idle mirth?—Was Madame Wallenberg so soon forgotten? Fearful of detection and impatient to escape the uncongenial noise, I stuffed book after book into my pocket.

“Where on earth is Walter?” cried Quinilla, —“noozled in some cranny, I’ll engage—’twill be good fun to ferret him—we’ll ransack his auger-holes after dinner, Mr. Sanford—He’ll redden up like fire, and stare at us like any thing!”

“Let the poor boy alone,” exclaimed my aunt.

“Oh! I’m resolved to find him out and quiz him dreadfully. What a hurry his old ladyship went off in!”

Here her voice was exalted into a shriek of laughter, during which, having finished my lading, I stole off.

Myself and freight were safe outside the window when I recollected that my precious memoranda were in my sleeping-room—I could not ensure their hiding place against Quinilla’s

ransacking propensity, and I was more than ever bent on surrendering my apartment to her brother—The hall door was open ; our little staircase, reached by a single step, was opposite ; the parlour, alias dining-room, on one side ; the kitchen on the other—Katy was frying pancakes, the perfume of which was all I could regale on, for a peep informed me that Katy's head-gear was awry, an indicative sign that her temper wanted tuning—I stole upstairs, (the clang of plates protecting me) and hastily secured my diary and inkhorn—Quinny's scarlet habit, pendent from my hat-pin, made me bounce into the landing ; a door abruptly opened ; Marion's head was put forth, and Helen's was peeping over Marion's shoulder : both the sweet faces bore the trace of tears.

“ 'Tis Walter !” they ejaculated.

“ Hush, hush !” cried I ; “ Quinilla will be on us.”

They drew me into their little chamber and closed the door—“ We feared you were gone with my uncle,” said Helen—I questioned her and found that my uncle had determined on accompanying Madame Wallenberg to the place

of embarkation ; that he had also business with his agent in Cork, and might not return for two or three weeks ; Slauveen had attended him.

“ And why are you not at dinner ? ” I enquired.

“ Dinner ! ” echoed Helen ; “ we are too full of tears to eat—what a change from yesterday ! ”

“ The hearts of the whole glen are breaking for the Baroness,” said Marion.—“ Kitty Driscoll has been here ; there was not a dry eye at the feast ; blind Johnny put his share into his wallet.—’Tis too much Walter—the Baroness to leave us and Quinilla to come back all at once !—a day’s preparation would have made us more resigned.”

“ And those young men,” said Helen ; “ I wish she had not brought them ; mirth, when one is sad, makes one feel sadder.”

“ I could quarrel with the sunshine,” rejoined Marion—“ I drove away the birds.—Shall we ever be as glad as we were yesterday ? ”

“ Madame Wallenberg may visit us again,” said Helen.

“ And Quinilla may marry that young man,” said Marion—“ although Mr. Sanford told me,”



she continued, "that but for his friend he would not have gone back to Mrs. Bullock's. They left Quinilla there, and went to sketch the Giant's causeway; when they returned to Cork it was Mr. Fielding who thought first of our cousin. Then they got acquainted with that foolish Mr. Theodore O'Toole, who persuaded them to stay for the Bullock fancy-ball. Mr. Sanford said his escorting Quinilla to the glen was accidental—but he might have said that to hide his love for her; William Driscoll couldn't bear to let the people know he was in love with Kitty."

"My aunt told me that Quinilla consulted her this morning about wedding clothes," said Helen. "Mr. O'Toole remains to give away the bride."

"Oh! don't be too sanguine, Helen—disappointment would break my heart!" cried Marion. "I could laugh again, I think, if once the wedding-day were fixed. We were happy, you know, even without Madame Wallenberg, when my cousin was away."

Helen's information somewhat cheered us. We discoursed on the probabilities of Quinilla's

marriage and change of residence, for all three decided she would certainly prefer living near the Bullocks. The sisters then discussed the *pour et contre* of Madame Wallenberg's return, Marion gravely suggesting the possibility of the Baron's dying soon, and promising to ask our aunt how old he was.

These topics duly canvassed we found spirits to enter on more trivial matters; I imparted my intention of resigning my chamber to O'Toole, and we were again entering on the subject of our hopes when my aunt's dinner peroration sounded—"Katy take away." I hastily embraced my sisters: they looked so dejected that I determined, from the morrow out, to battle with my selfishness, to give up my retreat till night-fall, and manfully to share with them the brunt of day-long clamour.

END OF VOL. I.

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